Mirror. K

A

Mirrour of Mercy,

OR,

An unparallel'd INSTANCE

OF

Victorious GRACE.

Where, in its reigning Sovereignty, it is seen to *triumph* in the Conversion and Salvation of *one of the chief of Sinners*, delighting to illustrate its *Frankness*, and glorying in the Displays of its own *Independency*, convincing him of his *lost Condition by Nature*, the Danger and Misery of a Christless State, and leading him to the Son of God.

TOGETHER

With an Account of his dreadful Conflicts and Combats with the Powers of Darkness, the hideous Temptations, *horrid blasphemous Injections*, and deep Despair he wrestled withal, groan'd under, and at last came off more than Conqueror over, thro' him that has lov'd him.

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The design'd Privacy of the following Sheets prevented their being communicated to any for an exact Revisal; if the Reader therefore should meet with any thing worthy Animadversion he is desir'd to overlook it.

A Mirrour of Mercy, &c.

EVER ſince I can remember the good Spirit of God hath been ſtriving with this ſinful Soul of mine, and very betimes, at Seven and Eight Years Old, would ſtir me up to remember my Creator; for coming of godly Parents, they took care to place me in ſuch Families as fear'd the Lord and call'd upon his Name, whoſe pious Inſtructions and Converſations were ſet home upon my Conſcience, ſo that I was very fearful of *Sin*, and took ſome Delight in the Ways of God; I had a great Concern for my Soul, and the Things of another World; I made conſcience of ſecret Prayer, and my Heart would ſmite me if at any time I neglected it. O! Who ſeem'd to bid fairer for Heaven than I in theſe Days? Who would not have took me to have been bound for *Zion*? But tho' my Heart was ſo tender, and ſo well inclin'd to that which is good, yet it was no *new Heart*, there was no ſupernatural *Change* wrought, and ſo was left expos'd to the vileſt Sins incident to corrupted Nature.

And truly, thro' the Original Depravation of my own vicious Inclinations, and the abominable Practices and Examples of others, I ſet out *early indeed* in the Ways of Death, poſting furiouſly for Hell, tho' at firſt I ſhould find many ſecret

Murmurs, and a great deal of Reluctancy in my own Breaſt, *Conſcience* being as yet tender; but by often reſiſting the *Spirit*, and ſtifling Convictions, it grew more flinty and remorſleſs, and ſo quickly became harden'd thro' the Deceitfulneſs of Sin; ſo that notwithſtanding all the repeated Calls in a bleſſed Miniſtry, various and cloſe Viſitations of the Spirit under the Word, and in ſecret, the ſeeing many converted to God before my Eyes, and hearing their Experiences, the bleſſed Society of ſome holy Souls, their particular Application, Advice and Counſel unto me, divers very inſtructive Diſpenſations of Providence, ſometime Judgment, ſometime Mercy, yet was not I at all wrought upon to the forſaking my ſinful Courſes, but went on perverſly, reſiſting and grieving the Holy Spirit ſtill; yea, ſo rooted and riveted was I in Sin, and ſo prodigiouſly baffl'd and hoodwink'd by Satan, that I ſaid, *I deſir'd no other Heaven* (wretched Soul!) *if I might enjoy my Sins eternally upon Earth!*

About *Auguſt* 1705. I was taken very ill; inſomuch that I deſpair'd of Life. But Oh! What Promiſes and Reſolutions did I then take up, according to *Pſal.* 78. O! How I contemn'd the World when I thought I muſt leave it! But all theſe ſtrong Shews of Repentance prov'd but Death-bed Reſolutions, which in a Fortnights time were quite forgot, and I became worſe than ever; but from that Sickneſs I ever after perceiv'd a viſible declining of my outward Man, and was perpetually under the Apprehenſions of Death, Judgment, and Eternity, which imbitter'd all the Comforts of Life to me, ſo that I could take Pleaſure in nothing, but could not make me forſake *Sin*.

Never

Never did any Soul take a more deſperate and ready Courſe to judicial Hardneſs and final Impenitency! O! the various Methods God hath taken with this ſinful Soul! how loth to give me up! how frequent were the Attempts he made upon me by that more inward immediate Way, *the Motions of his Spirit*, which peculiarly can import nothing but merciful Inclinations.

But notwithſtanding all the infinite Kindneſs and Patience of God, Strivings of his Spirit, the many Checks and Monitions of Conſcience, divers ſtartling Diſpenſations, in which I was made to ſee, that the Finger of God pointed at me, the continual Apprehenſion and Dread of approaching Death and Eternity that I carry'd about me, with the Concurrence of many ſweet and loving Providences that I can never forget, which, ſince I have ſeen, did all conſpire to bring about God's merciful Deſigns to my Soul, *all was in vain*, I ſtill follow'd my own wretched Inclinations, and was led Captive by the Devil at his Will, drinking in Iniquity like Water, and was as vain and refractory a Wretch as ever the Earth bore, a meer Lump of Vanity and Filth, Ignorance and Darkneſs, overgrown with Corruption, and grown preſumptuous in Sin; I ſay, *all was in vain*, till Chriſt *came to make me willing in the Day of his Power*.

On the 3d of *March*, 170$\frac{5}{6}$. being Sabbath-Day, and my Turn to ſtay at Home in the Morning, I was terribly afflicted, (as I had been for ſome time before) with the Thoughts of approaching Death, being violently ſeiz'd with ſuch a Weakneſs, that my Body even ſhook again, and had all the Marks and Symptoms of a ſudden Diſſolution; I thought I muſt in earneſt into another

World without Delay, and thereupon was ſuddenly ſmitten with a Senſe of Divine Juſtice, by an inviſible Hand taking Vengeance on my Conſcience, and was ſtruck with Trembling and Horror of Mind; and now I cry'd out with the convinc'd Jaylor, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* I ſat down, and took a Bible into my Hand, and with a great deal of Awe and Sollicitude of Spirit began to read, and all along as I read God made ſuch near Approaches to my Soul, that I could ſenſibly feel he was not far from me; every Word I read was ſo realiz'd to me, and accompany'd with the ſpecial Preſence of the inviſible God, that it left very deep Impreſſions upon me, and I found my ſelf much melted and broken; here felt I the Divinity, Majeſty and Power of the *Word!* By and by I came to thoſe Words of *Tamar*, *And I, whither ſhall I cauſe my Shame to go?* Upon which, without reading any further, I laid down the Bible, and with a Flood of Tears cry'd out, *And (I) whither ſhall I cauſe (my) Shame to go?* for I now beheld my ſelf as a moſt loathſome Miſcreant, and was exceeding vile in my own Eyes, and preſently there came a ſweet Calm upon my Spirits, and I fell into deep Thoughtfulneſs for about the ſpace of an Hour, but the Conceptions of my Mind, and what I then felt, can never be expreſs'd; it was ſomewhat thus.

My Mind being ſupernaturally illuminated by the Spirit, I was repreſented to my ſelf in a kind of *Viſion*, as retir'd from the whole World to an unfrequented ſolitary Place, leading my Life in a moſt mean contemptible Cottage, feeding, as it were, upon the very Duſt of the Earth, but good enough, nay, too good, as my contrite Heart then verily thought, for ſuch a traiterous Rebel

as

as I had been; but though I was thus remote from all Creatures, methought the Glory of God and inconceivable Light ſhone round about me, and I ſeem'd to be all the while in an uncommon and more immediate way in the Divine Preſence. But Oh! how was I brought down at God's Feet! thrown into the Duſt! broken, melted, made to abaſe my ſelf, loath and abhor my ſelf; I was fill'd with Sorrow, Shame and Indignation towards my own guilty Soul, perpetually judging and condemning my ſelf, and heartily juſtifying God if he ſhould do ſo to all Eternity; this was the unfeign'd Language and inmoſt Senſe of my very Soul, yet all along harbour'd within me a *ſecret Hope* that there was Mercy, Grace and Pardon in the Heart of God for me, from which Hope I felt inwardly ſpring much ſecret Joy: But Oh! what Tenderneſs of Heart! what Meltings and Relentings did I experience within this Hour! what infinite Longings after inward Holineſs and Purity! ſuch Sighs and Groans! ſudden and ſtrong Ejaculations! ſecret and undiſſembled Boilings up of Deſire! deep Wiſhes and Longings! even ſuch as never before or hardly ſince.

And this Work of the Spirit was far different from all his former Workings upon my Soul, for I was wont only to take on for thoſe notorious Sins that moſt diſturb'd my Conſcience, but was quite ignorant and unconcern'd about the Sinfulneſs of my *Nature* and *Original* Defilement; but now it was otherwiſe with me, for I both ſaw and felt with a Witneſs the Sinfulneſs of the State wherein I was born, the univerſal Pollution of my whole Man; and my Conſcience and Underſtanding being ſtrangely enlighten'd, I ſaw

that the inward Workings and Imaginations of my Heart had been only evil from the Womb; I now ſaw innumerable Swarms of ſecret Corruptions and ſpiritual Sins, like Atoms, in the Beams of my enlighten'd Underſtanding, which I never obſerv'd before; as tho' a Lamp were hung up within me I could turn my Eyes inward, and diſcern and reflect upon the moſt retir'd Workings of my Heart; the Darkneſs declin'd, and the true Light now began to dawn upon my Soul, and now I cry'd out with *David*, *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned.* I wept bitterly to think that I had all this while been ſinning againſt *Chriſt*, I ſay, againſt *Chriſt*, and the Grace and Spirit of Chriſt, ſo tender and compaſſionate a Saviour; Oh! I mourn'd over Chriſt as one that mourns for his only Son, and was in Bitterneſs for him as one that is in Bitterneſs for his Firſt-born; I did not then cry out from a Senſe of Divine Wrath, tho' my Sins had been ſo innumerable and ſo horrible, but to think that I had ſo ſlighted and abus'd the Patience and Long-ſuffering of God, Strivings of his Spirit, and merciful Providences, all my Life long, and in all this I was wholly, purely, *perfectly Paſſive*, meerly wrought upon by the *Spirit of God*; and this was at that time accompany'd with Loathing of *Sin* and ſinful *Self*, more than with fear of Hell and Damnation; I now found my very Soul to riſe up againſt my former curſed Luſts with Abhorrence and Deteſtation, as a weak and curious Stomach at any thing that is nauſeous and offenſive to it, ſo that the Hatred wherewith I now hated them was greater than the Love wherewith I had lov'd them; I never ſaw Sin, Sin it ſelf, *all Sin*, ſo hateful and odious before, and the

the Devil never ſhew himſelf a Devil indeed till now he ſaw I was parting from him for ever.

And all this while I thought I was accompany'd with an Angel, ſurpaſſingly beautiful and lovely! I now found that there was another and a better *World* than that which we now live in, where there's ſweeter Society, purer Delights, and more ſatisfying Joys than any this vile Earth could afford: O! Whither, whither was I carry'd in the Spirit! By Faith I was enabled to enter into that within the Vail, where was opened to me the Scene of inviſible Glories: *O! thoſe Rivers of Pleaſures which flow at God's Right Hand for evermore?* I now quite forgot the little Earth I trod upon: What, ſays I, is there any Hopes of being admitted into Glory? Then *farewel World!* I ſeem'd to take Leave of the World and all my Relations, as never to ſee them here any more. I ſaw that my neareſt Relations and deareſt Friends they dwelt above, and truly ever ſince I have been but as a Stranger and Pilgrim, ſeeking a better Country: This *World* that I ſo doted on, and ſo paſſionately lov'd, that even the Forethought of leaving it hath been to me like the rending of Soul from Body, could never ſince this time get the leaſt footing in my Affections, my Heart and Mind have been quite alienated from it, and dead to it; and indeed how ſhould it ever win away my Heart from Chriſt? Its Pleaſures are nothing, and thoſe very Cares and Incumbrances which it would fain tire me with, and which as Water it ſtrives to caſt upon the Flame of my Love, prove Rivers of Oil. 'Twas here that the Uſe of my intellectual ſelf-reflecting Powers were reſtor'd to me, which before were bound up in a ſtupifying dead Sleep as to

Spiritual Things, and by the mighty powerful Working of the *Holy Ghoſt* the Scales fell from my Eyes, and I was made to ſee *God* and *Chriſt*, *Sin* and *Duty*, *Heaven* and *Hell*, *Time* and *Eternity*, as they really are in their own true Appearances; O! I found that the Things which we ſee are but *Temporal*, but the Things that are inviſible are *Eternal*; my Mind being extraordinarily irradiated by the Bleſſed Spirit, I could with one Glance ſee before *Time* was, and when *Time* ſhall be no more, and how this World was circumſcrib'd with Eternity. When I roſe up I walk'd about the Shop, and ſaid to my ſelf, Oh, my Soul, doſt thou not feel thy ſelf bound and ſhut up, that thou canſt not think, reflect and meditate at Liberty? Alas! I found my ſelf to have been ſunk very deep in the Spiritual Death, ſtark dead in Sins and Treſpaſſes.

And here the ſeveral Steps of the Bleſſed Spirit in working *Faith*, which the famous Mr. *Rogers* of *Dedham* takes notice of, were as perceptible in me, I believe, as were ever in any in this World: As *firſt*, Illumination. *2dly*, Conviction. *3dly*, Terror. Then *firſt*, The Remedy reveal'd. *2dly*, Belief of it in general. *3dly*, Support in the mean time from ſinking under the Burden, and falling into Deſpair. *4thly*, Contrition. *5thly*, Deſire. *6thly*, Requeſt. *7thly*, Care. *8thly*, Hope. *9thly*, Joy. *10thly*, Hungring and thirſting after Mercy and after Chriſt. And *laſtly*, Reſolution to part with all for Chriſt. Now each of theſe Workings I do diſtinctly remember to my great Eſtabliſhment.

However, for the preſent I wiſt not whence this was, and that I had all this while been under the powerful Influences and in the Hand of the

the *Spirit*; neither was I ſenſible that I had been apprehended of Chriſt, (as doubtleſs I was) or knew what any of theſe Things meant, only I perceiv'd there had been ſome Alteration upon my Spirit, and I began to ſee Things in another Light and Apprehenſion than formerly.

But here Satan finding a Mutiny to be growing within, and that I began to be weary of my old Maſter, ſoon laid about him how he might bring me into utter Deſtruction and Deſpair; while the ſtrong Man kept the Houſe all was in peace, but finding he could no longer hold the Fort of my Soul, and that a ſtronger than he was about to diſpoſſeſs him, he began to rake in the Dunghill of my unclean Heart, ſo that every Thought and Imagination of my Soul was wicked and abominable; this ſtruck me with Aſtoniſhment! I could not think what was befall'n me, for I then little ſuſpected Satan in the Matter; by and by he comes in with his fiery Darts and *blaſphemous Injections*, with theſe he put me into ſuch a dreadful Conſternation as was ready to ſink me into the Ground; I thought I was poſſeſs'd by him, and tho' doubtleſs he meant nothing leſs thereby than for ever to undo me, yet my gracious God meant not ſo, but only made them further his kind Deſign upon my Soul; and now being diſtracted almoſt with theſe Fire-Balls of Satan, my ſleepy Conſcience began to be thoroughly awaken'd, and my many notorious Sins, with all their aggravating Circumſtances, ſet in order before me, whereby I was driven almoſt to my Wits end; thus went Matters with me for about a Fortnight.

Now ever ſince my Sickneſs in *Auguſt* I was mightily ſubject to ſtrange Terrors, ariſing ſometimes

times from external Accidents and hidden natural Cauſes, uncouth Viſions and Apparitions, full of Amazement and Fear; and juſt about my *Converſion* I was fiercely and terribly aſſaulted with *horrid Satanical Suggeſtions and blaſphemous Thoughts*, and all this to my Apprehenſions juſt at the very Door of Eternity; I reckon'd my ſelf free amongſt the Dead, which repreſented theſe great and momentous Concerns ſo near and to the Life, and gave ſuch a true and vivid Idea of them, that they left very deep Impreſſions upon my Spirit, and caus'd me to paſs thro' the *New Birth* with great Obſervation.

On *March* 17, (being 17 Years and almoſt a Quarter Old) being Sabbath-Day in the Morning, I was under ſore Perplexities of Spirit, and knew not what to do, nor what would become of me, but when all were gone out I ſat down, and very remarkably, (for I am ſure the Finger of God was in it) there lay a little Book before me on the Counter, which when I took up I found to be the Life of *John Bunyan*, ſo I began to read with a trembling Soul, and reading read my own Caſe exactly, which ſomewhat allay'd my Fears; O! how ſuitable was that Book to my then deſperate Condition! But coming preſently to the Paragraph 175 thus he writes. "Wherefore, 'ſays he, my Life ſtill hung in Doubt, not know-'ing which way I ſhould tip, only this I found 'my Soul deſire, even to caſt it ſelf at the Foot 'of Grace by Prayer and Supplication. But Oh! 'twas hard for me to pray to that Chriſt for 'Mercy, againſt whom I had thus moſt vilely ſin-'ned! 'Twas hard Work, I ſay, to offer to look 'him in the Face. O! the Shame that did now 'attend me! eſpecially when I thought I am now

'going

'going to pray to him for Mercy, that I had ſo 'ſlightly eſteem'd a while before; I was aſham'd, 'yea, even confounded; but I ſaw there was but 'one Way with me, I muſt go to him, and hum-'ble my ſelf unto him, and beg that he of his 'wonderful Mercy would ſhew Pity to me, and 'have Mercy on my wretched ſinful Soul. My 'Caſe being deſperate I thought with my ſelf I 'can but die, and if it muſt be ſo, it ſhall once 'be ſaid, *That ſuch an one died at the Foot of Chriſt 'in Prayer.* But Oh! the powerful Energy! the wonderful immediate Workings of the Bleſſed Spirit that here I felt! what an amazing Light ſtruck into my Heart! it gave preſently ſuch a mighty *Turn* upon my Soul as can never be expreſs'd! I both ſaw and felt thoſe Things which are unutterable! I immediately conferr'd not with Fleſh and Blood, but obey'd the Voice of this Heavenly Calling, and without any Demur, Reſervation, Exception, or Reply, preſently clos'd with *Chriſt*, leaping for Joy! Oh! how efficaciouſly and powerfully, yet ſweetly and gently, was I drawn! had I the Tongues of all the Angels in Heaven I could never report what Glories I then ſaw in the *Perſon of Jeſus*! how ſuited I found him to my deſperate Condition! how nearly I was touch'd with the Apprehenſion of his *Love!* Oh! I was utterly overwhelm'd and quite ſwallow'd up in this Depth of Divine Mercy! I marvel that my Soul was not rapt out of my Boſom, and that my Body did not diſſolve for Joy! Hereupon I laid down the Book, and fell into a great Paſſion of Weeping, but indeed it was a Fit of *overpowering Joy!* I wept for Joy, and for Self-indignation, not for fear of being damn'd, for I was ſure my Sins were pardon'd; and

and preſently I was as if I had ſeen the Lord Jeſus with my Bodily Eyes in the Air, ſhining brighter than the Sun, holding out a Scepter of Mercy unto me, and I was preſently enabled in a moſt ſtupendious manner to go to him as I was, *a poor, loſt, periſhing, helpleſs Wretch*, without Money, and without Price, *and he gave me to drink of the Water of Life freely*, yea, abundantly, and without upbraiding.

I now ſet to *my Seal*, That God is true, and that *whoſoever comes to Chriſt he will in no wiſe caſt out*.

Thus was I ſnatch'd as it were out of the very Belly of Hell. Then reaching forth to Heaven I cry'd out with Tears, *Ah! this is the Bleſſed Jeſus againſt whom I have all this while been ſinning!* Oh! I thought my ſinning againſt Love and Mercy, and the yearning Bowels of a *Jeſus*, whom I now underſtood had done ſo much for me, this Conſideration ſwallow'd up all my other Sins, and yet that after all he ſhould behold me with a merciful Eye, Oh! this was it that thaw'd my Heart, and ſet the Tears a trickling from my Eyes; but theſe Tears were Tears of *Joy*, and ſuch as the *World* knows nothing of! my Heart was that very Moment fill'd with *Peace that paſſes all Underſtanding*, yea, with *Joy unſpeakable! and full of Glory!* I had a Taſte given me of the hidden *Manna*, and knew what that *White Stone* means, which none knows ſave he that receives it. *True Repentance is ſweet indeed!* Oh! what a Tranſport it put me into! What! was there Hopes for ſuch a *loſt Creature* as I! Oh, God hath abundantly given Proof that he delights not in the Death of a Sinner; and after a little Pauſe I cry'd out again in an Extaſy, *Who knows the*

Power

Power of the Reſurrection of Chriſt? And what can't the Blood of Chriſt cleanſe from? Here I felt and found Chriſt, to be the *Wiſdom* of God, and the *Power* of God. So ſtrong was my *Faith*, that I ſeem'd continually to converſe with him as a Man with his Friend. The Lord *Jeſus* did not now ſeem to me as a Stranger, and as one afar off in another World; but to be nigh me, even in my very Heart. By the powerful Operation of the Spirit, I had a lively feeling of my Union to him; and could ſay, *That Chriſt was in me.*

Now when I firſt look'd abroad in the Streets, after this miraculous Work was wrought upon me, I thought I ſaw *Death* written upon the Face of every one I paſſed by; and ſuch was the mighty Alteration upon my whole Soul, that for a long time I ſeem'd to be in a *New World*, and hardly knew the Street that I liv'd in, or the Perſons that I convers'd with; and had nothing before my Eyes, but the ſitting of the Throne, and the raiſing of the Dead, wherever I went; and often when I went to Bed, did really look to hear the ſound of the Laſt-Trump and the *Midnight-Cry* before the Morning, with ſuch ſtrong and ſtrange Apprehenſions was I poſſeſs'd, that the End of all Things was at hand. Body and Soul grew well at once, and had this continually ſounding in my Ears, *Mercy rejoyceth againſt Judgment.*

I know there is ſuch a thing too coomon in the World, as *Enthuſiaſtical Aſſurance*, whereby many wofully deceive themſelves, with a groundleſs Confidence of the Love of God, and pretend to very high Aſſurance of Salvation, who were never yet experimentally acquainted with a ſaving

ving *Change*; and are as ignorant of the *New-Birth*, and Implantation into *Chriſt*, as was *Nicodemus*, but bear about them the evident Proofs of an unrenewed Heart, that plainly ſhews, they are only deluded by *Satan* to their future greater Downfall. But there is no need to queſtion thoſe Teſtimonies of the Spirit, which do uſually attend ſo thorow, univerſal and miraculous a *Change* of Soul, unſpeakable deteſtation of every *Sin*, and hungring and thirſting after Holineſs and Righteouſneſs more than my appointed Food.

Here was that in *Ezekiel* 16. 6, 8. verified and fulfilled; *When I paſſed by thee, and ſaw thee polluted in thy own blood, I ſaid unto thee when thou waſt in thy blood; live; yea, I ſaid unto thee, when thou waſt in thy blood, live.* My time was the time of Love, even when there was no Form nor Comlineſs in me.

Now *Faith* ſhines clearly in my Soul, and ſhews it ſelf with a witneſs, producing ſuch admirable Effects and marvelous Alterations, as plainly evinc'd it to be no dead Faith, but the Faith of the Operation of God. *Old things paſſed away, and all things became new.* I preſently found my ſelf acted by a greater and better Spirit than that of my own. Oh! what a ſweet Power to perform Duty in a Goſpel-way, and from a principle of *Love*, did I find infus'd into my Soul by the *Spirit of Chriſt!* That I read, and pray'd, and thought, and ſpoke as I never did before. Need we preſs an hungry Man to his Food, that is ready to die for the want of it? Need we drag the Chaſed-Hart to the Brook, that even faints for the longing it hath to it? No more did my Soul now need to be urg'd with

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Arguments, to love God and converſe with Heaven, which was now become the only deſire of my Heart, the Reſt and Solace of my longing Soul, the Air I lov'd and choſe to breath in, the very Element wherein I delighted eternally to dwell; and felt, that whilſt I pray'd I was anſwer'd; wherefore I can ſay to all, We muſt firſt be *Alive* before we can *Work*, firſt *Believe* and then *Do*. Now, ſaid I, with a great deal of Joy, I hope the Body of *Sin* has receiv'd, from *Chriſt*, its *Deaths Wound*, ſo as never more to be able to get Dominion over me again. I was no leſs glad to find *Sin* kill'd and remov'd, than pardoned:— I even leap'd for joy, to find my ſelf at Liberty, and freed from ſo ſore a Bondage. Ah! fooliſh Souls! That would fain be ſav'd in their Sins, and ſo flatter themſelves with hopes of utter Impoſſibilities, they ſtrive to flee an Hell of Fire and Brimſtone, whilſt they embrace and hug a worſe in their Boſoms. My Heart was ſo implacably ſet and turn'd againſt *Sin*, eſpecially, my formerly moſt indulged *Sins*, that I ſolemnly declar'd in the preſence of one, that I would chooſe rather to be kill'd upon the Spot, and in cold Blood, than be voluntarily guilty of them again. *Chriſt* was exceeding *precious* to me. I had heard often enough of *Jeſus*, by the hearing of the Ear, *But now mine Eyes ſaw him.* Here was I made to taſte the Powers of the World to come, and was ſufficiently convinc'd, that *Religion* was no *Fiction*. *Heaven* now no longer ſounds as an empty Name; nor Spiritual and Celeſtial Glories, Beauties, Joys, Felicities, disbeleiv'd becauſe inviſible. I now began to apprehend, how nearly I was ally'd to thoſe glorious Spirits above; and that the deareſt Bonds

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and Ties of Fleſh and Blood, were nothing to that myſterious and unſpeakably near Relation I ſtood in to the *Father of my Spirit*, in whom I liv'd and mov'd, and had my Being. I now ſaw, That my Soul was too highly deſcended, and of too excellent an Original, to lie grovling and ſcrabling on the Earth. I felt my ſelf endow'd with Faculties and Powers, far too noble and capacious for any thing in this vain World to ſatisfy. I now underſtood there was another Trade to be driven, than for the tranſitory Traſh of this World, an heavenly Calling to be minded; I found the moſt profitable Traffic and Merchandize, was for the Treaſures of the other World; and at once derided and pitied the Muckworm, that is perpetually rooting in Clay. I was as one *alive from the Dead!* Now *Death* was no more terrible to me. Oh! the ſtupendious Power of *Faith!* The very moment before, I trembled like an Aſpen-leaf at the Thoughts of that inexorable Sergeant, but now, I could go out and welcome him in the way, and even provoke him to arreſt me; for, *I knew in whom I had believed*, and by bleſſed Experience could tell what that meant, *Perfect Love caſts out Fear.* I could now ſay as *Paul* ſaid, *Chriſt loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* I had many ſweet foretaſts of the Reſurrection to come, and glimpſes as it were of that *Glory*, which ſhall hereafter be reveal'd: Thoughts of unutterable Rapture! Flaſhes of eternal Light! Rays of immortal Glory! like Lightning beating upon my Soul! I ſay the Truth, I lye not, my Conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt. It's ſtrange to conſider, how ſuch amazing Appearances of God, and Manifeſtations of his Love,

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ſhould be ſo quickly queſtion'd, nay uttterly loſt, as they were afterwards in an Hour of Darkneſs and Temptation. I deſir'd nothing more, than to depart out of this World and to go to *Jeſus*; and very deſirous I was, that at my Death I might glorify God, and report his Love to my ſurviving Friends.

Thus I remain'd for ſome conſiderable time, Night and Day, in *unſpeakable Joy!* To think that ever *Heaven* ſhould be given to ſuch a caſt-away as *I!* O! the height! O! the depth! of *Redeeming Love!* Surely this *Joy* was a piece of Heaven let down into my Soul; it was for kind the ſame with the *Bleſſed*, it only differ'd in Degree. Here I taſted and ſaw that *God* was *Love*, the Fountain, the Element of Love. Here was I touch'd with a lively Senſe of *Chriſt's Divinity*, and plainly ſaw, and was infinitely aſſured, that he was God, *Co-equal*, *Co-eſſential*, *Co-eternal* with the *Father*. It was *Jeſus! Jeſus!* a *Crucified Jeſus*; *God* Incarnate! *Chriſt* in our aſſumed Nature! That for ſo long a time did captivate my Eyes, engroſs my Thoughts, and was the *Object* of my ſtrange Wonder, Faith, Love and Adoration! O! the Sights I had of the *other World?* O! the illuminating Irradiations of that Glorious Divine Spirit! What Soul-enlightning, Heart-purifying, Heart-raviſhing Communications! Thus was I born again, born of the Spirit; and thus I *paſs'd from Death to Life*, ſcarce believing what I both felt and ſee.

Now the reſtleſs Wand'rings of my immortal Soul, began to center and fix upon a God in Chriſt, as its *higheſt Good*, and *everlaſting Portion*; and never till now, did I know what an Heaven

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it is, to be freed from the torment of *unſatisfied Deſires*; but was, during my *unconverted State*, perpetually diſquieted with *irkſome Wiſhes* and *unanſwer'd Longings*; ever deſiring, never ſated. When I thought my ſelf happieſt I ſtill wanted *ſomething*, which the whole Compaſs of this created *World* could not yield; and the Reaſon is obvious, as *Auſtin* ſays, *The reaſonable Soul* being made in the *Likeneſs of God*, can here find no full *Satisfaction*; for it being *capable* of *God*, it can be *ſatisfied* with nothing but *God*. Oh! I can remember with Grief and Joy thoſe wretched unhappy Days, when this, then poor and ſeduced Soul of mine, fondly doated on, and was quite ſick of Love, for the lying, dying Vanities of this miſerable World, ſeeking Happineſs where it was not to be found: Oft hath ſhe beaten and tired her ſelf with the vain and bootleſs Love of the *Creature*, (for in thoſe Days, I lov'd and ſerv'd the Creature, the vain, empty, unſatisfying Creature, and not the *Creator*, who is bleſſed for ever) who never but pierc'd me with Grief and Sorrow; but Lo! Now I have found the Spring, the Fountain, the Ocean of *Love*, who fills my Soul with ineffable Delight, and unknown Joys, brimful and running over. So that I cannot now ſay, Oh that I had but this *one Thing* more, this *one Thing*, and then my Happineſs were compleat: No Lord, in the Participation of thy Favour is Fulneſs of Contentment; this fills every corner of my Soul, all its Longings, all its Options, its vaſt Capacities and infinite Deſires, are *for ever ſatisfied*, in a Senſe of thy *everlaſting Love*!

And here I began to betake my ſelf much to reading and ſearching the *Scriptures*, which were

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to me, as though never before heard of: Such a wretched Stranger was I to the inward, ſpiritual, ſaving Underſtanding of the *Bible*. I had read in it often enough, and beheld it as it was in the Book; But alas! now methought, I ſaw with new Eyes, and beheld marvelous Things out of God's Law. All Things were ſet before me in a new and a ſurprizing Light, and was helpt to ſee beyond the *Letter*, and clearly to underſtand the hidden and myſterious Truths of the Goſpel. Oh! how did every Verſe, almoſt, ſhine before me? How did every Word pronounce my Abſolution; and all the Bible concur to ratify and confirm my Reconciliation and eternal Salvation? Eſpecially two out of *John*, and one out of *Jeremiah*, were ſet home upon me, with wonderful eſtabliſhing Power and Efficacy.

John 6. 44. *No Man can come unto me, except the Father, who hath ſent me, draw him.* I was as if Chriſt had looked down upon me from Heaven, and ſaid, *Thou art indeed come to me, and be aſſured thou couldſt never have come, had it not been given thee of my Father; Fleſh and Blood hath not reveal'd this unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven, therefore look thou to his free eternal unchangeable Love, he hath but drawn thee unto me that he might bring thee to himſelf.* Here did the Spirit, by the Streams, lead me to the Fountain, and told me, that God had loved me with an everlaſting Love, and therefore with Loving-kindneſs he had drawn me.

Another was, When the Devil and my unſtable Mind were arguing; *But how do you know you have taken the right Way?* For now I had neglected and diſregarded the Miniſtry; alas!

I went to the Houſe of God, as many now do, with a fore-fixed Deſign, only to ſee and be ſeen, and was almoſt an utter ſtranger to my Bible, and all good Books which ſhould furniſh me with Knowledge, and acquaint me with the Doctrines of the Goſpel; and therefore ſays *Satan*, How do you know you have taken the *right Way*, who hath inform'd you, or been your Guide? There be many falſe, but one true one. Your eternal All depends upon it! Dare you venture to reſt upon what you have done? Then came that Scripture with irreſiſtable Light and Power upon my Soul, *John* 14. 6. *I am the way and the truth and the life; No Man cometh unto the Father but by me.* This for the preſent ſcatter'd all my Doubts, and gave me great Satisfaction: Yet ſtill my Heart began again to be jealous, and fear leſt all ſhould not be right; for I conſider'd, that the *Salvation of my Soul*, was a Matter of the very laſt Importance, the Conſequences were infinite and endleſs, and that the *Evidence* of ſuch a *Vile Wretch*, as I had been but now, being brought into a *Juſtified State*, had need be very ſtrong and plain; then fell upon my Mind *Jeremiah* 13. 23. *Can the* Ethiopian *change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots, then may ye alſo do Good, which are accuſtomed to do Evil*: So that I ſaw, it was as impoſſible for the ſtream and bent of the Heart of an habituated reſolved Sinner to be turn'd from his Luſts, on Chriſt and Spiritual Things, as to remove the Leopard's Spots, or change the Blackamoor's Skin, without irreſiſtable, Omnipotent, Heart-changing *Grace*: But now I found my Heart run clean counter to what it was wont; It was now fully ſet and bent towards God and Chriſt; I found a vehe-

vehement Affection, and unfeign'd Love, Complacency and Delight kindled in my Breaſt, in and towards all that appear'd to be his; whom I never loved nor minded before. I ſaw no Beauty in a Child of God, though Chriſt ſays, *My love thou art all fair*; but now from my very Soul I accounted them the only excellent Ones of the Earth, and look'd but wiſhly and coldly, mingled with pity, whereſoever I eſpied not the *Image of Chriſt*. Unexpreſſible Deſires I had, and inſatiable Longings after *Purity in the inward Man*, to which none could be conſcious but the Searcher of Hearts, hungring and thirſting like a New-born-babe after Chriſt, and whatever would promote my Spiritual Growth: All which Diſpoſitions and Cravings, I was fully ſatisfied, never bred in *Natures Soil*, but cou'd be created and implanted in my Soul by no other than the Hand of *Supernatural Grace*. This *Change*, ſays *Luther*, This *New* Judgment, *New* Feeling, *New* Moving, do plainly witneſs that the Holy Ghoſt is preſent with us, and in us: For, ſays he, Theſe Things are not wrought in the Heart by Man's Strength, nor gotten by Man's Induſtry and Travel, but are obtain'd by Chriſt alone, who firſt makes us Righteous by the knowledge of himſelf in his holy Goſpel, and then creates a *New* Heart in us, and cauſes it to bring forth *New* and *Spiritual Motions*. Thoſe three Scriptures, for the Life, Light, and Power they bring along with them, I may ſay with *Origen*, are *meæ Scripturæ*. But never a Verſe could I caſt my Eye upon, but I found Life and unutterable Sweetneſs in it, in a tranſcendent degree: The Lord opening my Underſtanding to underſtand them, and to ſee and feel my

my own undoubted Right and Property in them; which is the very Life and Soul of all that Divine Sweetneſs reveal'd in the Goſpel.

And now no ſooner was I riſen with *Chriſt*, and found how good the Lord was, but I was for inviting others *to taſte and ſee.* O! the Love and Compaſſion I bore to *Souls!* with whom my Caſe was once the ſame; (though the Devil ſetting in with my natural Baſhfulneſs I could not break my Mind to them as I deſir'd) What, ſays I, though they be not related to me by Fleſh and Blood? What though in all natural and worldly reſpects they are unto me the utmoſt Strangers? Affection and Good-Will is due to them upon much higher Accounts: Are they not all Spirits of the ſame precious everlaſting Nature with me; *muſt they not all abide throughout an endleſs Duration?* Oh! precious immortal *Souls!* I thought I could have fell down at the Feet of every one I met, and beg'd of them to mind and remember their Souls. Every one I ſaw had a deep and moſt affectionate Wiſh from me; *Oh!* ſaid I within my ſelf, *That you did but know Jeſus!*

But here *Satan* finding me won out of his Power, and fully determin'd for *Chriſt*, began thus ſubtilly to ſuggeſt, *But conſider firſt*, ſaid *Satan, ſit down again Man, and count the Coſt, think with thy ſelf what thou muſt prepare to undergo if thou entreſt thy ſelf into Chriſt's Service, there will be Contempt and Diſgrace; for thou art now aſſociating thy ſelf to a Company of poor, mean, contemptible Creatures*; ſuch he call'd the Children of God; *Thou engageſt the World againſt thee, there's Priſon, nay thy very Life, Fire and Faggot; how likeſt thou that?* Theſe Words

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Satan ſuggeſted to me as ſtrongly and ſenſibly, as if he had appear'd to me in a viſible Shape; to which I heartily and chearfully anſwer'd, (for I ſaw him that is inviſible) *Lord! Lord! I take thee upon thy own terms; thou haſt created the Smith that bloweth the Coals in the Fire, and that brings forth an Inſtrument for his Work; and thou haſt created the Waſter to deſtroy*; and 'tis thou haſt ſaid, *No Weapon form'd againſt* Zion *ſhall proſper*; whereupon *Satan* fled, and never more attack'd me in this kind: Then I thought I ſaw *Jeſus* looking down from Heaven upon me, and ſaying, *Strait is the Gate and narrow is the Way that leads to Life, and few there be that find it*: And therewithall adding, *Thou haſt a narrow and thorny Way to go*, (which ſince I have found to be true,) *but he ſhall feed his Flocks like a Shepheard; he ſhall gather the Lambs with his Arms and carry them in his Boſom, and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with Young*; which alſo I have found equally true.

Bleſſed is he, whoſoever ſhall not be offended in Chriſt.

Thus I continued for ſome time, overcome with Joy under the Influence of that Light which darted into the dark Dungeon of my Soul at *Converſion*; and the Love of God in Chriſt to me, confirm'd with invincible Reaſons; I was made Partaker of a Divine Nature, and I knew it; I felt my Soul bound up in the Bundle of Life, and as certainly *Chriſt*'s, as though I were already enter'd the Verge of *Glory!*

All this while I held my peace, and ſaid not a Word to any of that *unſpeakable Joy* I felt in my Soul, except what might have been read in the ſhining Lightſomneſs of my Countenance, and

unuſual, ſweet, calm Serenity of Spirit, which could not poſſibly be conceal'd, neither as yet had I told any one in the World, how graciouſly the Lord had dealt with me; how that I was lately miraculouſly Converted and drawn to the *Lord Jeſus*, was born again, become a *New Creature*, made an Heir of the Kingdom of Heaven, and that I bore about me, the Seal and Earneſt and ſure Pledges of my Part and Portion in the Life to come.

But when I came to my ſelf a little, out of theſe ſtrange Extaſies of *Spiritual Joy*, I began to conſider, what great Things God had done for my Soul; what infinite Condeſcention and aſtoniſhing Grace! had been ſhown towards me, *the worſt of Sinners*: Whereupon, I earneſtly deſir'd to lament ſuitably, and bluſh at the remembrance of my paſt Provocations, and horrid Ingratitude in offending ſo gracious a God, and ſinning againſt ſuch Love and Mercy. But alas! I found not my Heart to relent and bleed, as I expected; but it was even ſhut up again, and exceeding hard. This preſently gave birth to endleſs Objections, and fill'd me with a variety of miſgiving Thoughts, torturing Fears, and terrible Jealouſies: It ſtartled me to find ſuch a vaſt Diſproportion between the *number of my Sins and the fewneſs of my Tears*. I long'd and pray'd till my Heart was ready to burſt again, to pour out Floods of contrite Tears, but not one would come: Now therefore I began to queſtion the *Truth* of my *Converſion*; ſo that I was put to a ſtand, I could not take a Step further. And here *Satan* plies the Advantage, and comes in upon me with his ſly Suggeſtions, and I began thus to ſay to my ſelf, *Surely this is bold Preſumption*

tion in me, coming freſh, as it were reaking out of Sodom, *thus to lay hold on Chriſt, and pretend to an Intereſt in the Love of God. Look*, ſaid I, *it is but a day or two ago, that I was provoking the Lord to his face, by my preſumptuous daring Sins and abominable Life, and do I now pretend to be a Friend of ſo holy and dreadful a Majeſty; ſurely I ought to have amended my Life firſt, had ſome Experience of the Change of my Converſation, to have mourn'd, griev'd, and repented more remarkably, before I was thus familiar with God, and preſently take upon me to be ſo free and intimate with him.* Thus being wavering and unſtable, weak in Judgment and Experience, though of ſtrong and inflam'd Affections; and not having been able, diſtinctly to reflect upon the manner of the Spirits working upon me, and drawing me to a Cloſure with Chriſt, in ſo ſingular and aſtoniſhing a manner, bringing down Heaven into my Soul at once, and filling me with Joy unſpeakable, neither having read or heard any thing of the manner of true and remarkable Converſions, the Lord withdrawing himſelf, permitted *Satan* to overcaſt my Mind, and to ſuggeſt to me, that all my rapturous Joys and Aſſurances of Heaven, were nothing but preſumptuous Confidences, and vain Deluſions: Hereupon I began to miſgive and give way, this Unbelief prevail'd upon me, till at length, Satan taking his Advantage, and ſetting in with my ſtrong and as yet much unmortified Corruptions, entangled me and plung'd me down into the Pit of open Deſparation; ſo that notwithſtanding all thoſe views of Glory, and aſſurances of eternal Life, and ſweeteſt Embracement of the *Lord Jeſus* in the Arms of my new given Faith, which I had ſo lately really enjoy'd;

this kindled an Hell in my Conſcience, and lock'd me up in the Dungeon of Diſpair; for I would never be told, nor would by any means believe, that one truly *Converted* and ſavingly united to Chriſt, could be ſubject to ſuch violent Workings of Corruptions.

Wherefore, as *Paul*, after the abundance of Revelations, had a Meſſenger of *Satan* ſent to buffet him, ſo the Lord, in infinite Love and Wiſdom, ſaw meet to let looſe *Satan* and my Corruptions upon me, and to withdraw the Light of his Countenance, to prevent that Lukewarmneſs, Security and Pride, which I remember was then coming upon me.

Now the Hour of Darkneſs and Temptation is come, and I muſt enter the Liſts with my Spiritual Adverſaries, never more to lay aſide the Weapons of my Warfare, till the Captain of my Salvation calls me to my Crown. And now my ſweet dear Jeſus *having given them Commiſſion to muſter up their Forces, and band themſelves together againſt me, retires and ſtands behind the Wall; ſtill ſecretly ſuccouring me with freſh Supplies, reſolving to uphold me by his Omnipotent Arm, and at laſt, make me more than Conquerour. And now the old red Dragon having receiv'd his Power, ſtraitway bids me to the Combat, and with incredible Rage makes his Onſet.*

Wherefore, *Satan* perceiving that there was now no hope of reducing me to his Servitude and Thraldom (for however unreſolv'd I remain'd about my *State*, I was inflexibly reſolv'd never to turn again to Folly; alas! my very Deſires and Inclinations did inwardly and ſpontaneouſly move quite contrary) The Lord in very Mercy to my Soul, permitted him to muſter up his Temp-

Temptations to annoy me; whereupon my Comfort was taken away from me, all paſt Experiences hid, or elſe I thought them but counterfeit, and Deluſions; Darkneſs ſeiz'd upon me, and whole Floods of Spiritual Temptations pour'd out upon me from Morning to Night, ſuch *dreadful Blaſphemous Suggeſtions*, and *vile Immaginations*, as are not to be thought without trembling, much leſs to be nam'd: And with that hurrying Force and Violence as bore down all before it. It's wonderful, that ſuch Agonies as they threw me into, did not ſeperate Soul and Body. And here, he who will be ever raking in the unregenerate Part, at the ſame time took his Advantage to provoke my inward, habitual, inveterate *Corruptions*: So that Corruptions did as naturally ſpring out of my Heart as Water out of a Fountain. Behold the difference between *Grace* and *Nature*; a little while ago, the moſt enormous Sins ſtabb'd my dead Soul through and through, and it never cry'd out nor complain'd: But now, ſo quick and tender was my renewed Soul become, that not the *leaſt ſinful Motion or outgoing of Heart* could eſcape my Notice and painful Senſation.

Now my *Faith* fail'd me, for thought I, they that are *Chriſt*'s have Crucified the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts; I thought no Perſon *effectually called*, could ever have ſuch prodigious, loathſome, abominable Thoughts and Inclinations. Now the reaſon why theſe violent ſtirrings of Corruptions were ſo ſurprizing to me, was, becauſe they were altogether unexpected. I look'd not for them, after that firſt great turn of my Soul to God, and bleſs'd Conqueſt over the Power of Sin, when I gave up my Heart en-

tirely to *Chriſt*. I then deſir'd *Sin's utter Deſtruction*, I would have had it ſo kill'd by my Good-Will, that it ſhould have mov'd and ſtirr'd no more for ever: And ſo fooliſh was I, as to think it would indeed be ſo. 'Tis true, by the wonderful Operations of the *Spirit*, and Exerciſe of a ſtrong and lively Faith, *Sin* ſeem'd to be ſtruck dead for the preſent; and I now ſee, that there was good Reaſon why ſo it ſhould be, as Dr. *Owen* ſays, *Old things were then paſſed away, and all things become new, and my Soul under the Power of that Univerſal Change, was utterly turn'd away from thoſe things which would foment, ſtir up, or cheriſh any Luſt or Temptation.* But now, when ſome of theſe Advantages were paſt, and Sin began to ſtir and act again, I verily thought, the Work I had paſt through, was not *True and Saving* but only *Temporary*; nay, I thought Sin had more Strength than before, and I look'd upon my ſelf as more wicked and vile than ever. Ah! thought I, Sin is only retir'd from its outward, notorious viſible Actings, and hath made its Retreat into my Heart as its ſtrong and impregnable hold, where I thought it would remain inſuperable for ever. *Oh!* ſays I, *who will deliver me from this Body of Death!* I was as though I were glued and nail'd to my Sins, and that for ever. They ſeem'd to cry after me, and ſay, *We are thine abhor'd Works of Darkneſs, and we will follow thee.* Oh! ſaid I, I had never had this Experience of the deadly rage and fury of *Sin*, had I not formerly ſo greedily gratified it, and hug'd it ſo cloſe in my Boſom: I may thank my ſelf, for all this; This is of my own procuring: Had I not heretofore ſo indulg'd my wicked Inclinations, they would not

now

now have ſo madly rag'd and tore, impatient of all Reſtraint and Oppoſition. And what, ſays I, though I can appeal to the Heart-ſearching God, *whoſe Eyes are as a Flame of Fire.* That I deteſt theſe abominable Suggeſtions, and hateful Luſts, from my very Soul; and what though my Eyes guſh out *Rivers of Tears*, yet if I can never be freed from them, what will it avail me, ſeeing, *Into the Holy* Jeruſalem *in no wiſe muſt enter any thing that defileth or worketh Abomination*, Revel. 21. & laſt. Oh! this would rend the very Caul of my Heart, and make my Heart-ſtrings tremble! Now I being as yet but a green Soldier, and a Novice in the Chriſtian *Warfare*, ſunk in my Mind greatly indeed, and *meditated nothing but Terrour*; my Heart even died away within me for fear. I began to be quite heartleſs and hopeleſs; for, ſays I, do what I can, I ſhall never be able to hold out, but ſhall fall as a Prey to my curſed Luſts. *O! the inteſtine Strifes, and bitter Conteſts! between the Old Man and the New: The Fleſh and the Spirit!*

Now I went dow the Hill apace, and *Satan* got advantage of me every Day: As *Faith* was *weakned*, *Corruptions got Strength*, and the more *they* prevail'd, the more again would my *Faith* fail me. Oh! how tottering did I walk, ready to throw up and give over every Moment; unſtable as Water, thruſt through with every Temptation.

Thus was I rent and torn as with a Thunderbolt, betwixt my own violent Corruptions and *Satan*'s Temptations *all the Summer*, *Night and Day*; for ſince my Converſion even until now (ſave two or three, juſt after that miracu-

lous *Change* paſſed upon me) I have ſcarcely enjoy'd one Night free from the *horrideſt Suggeſtions and Moleſtations of the Devil. Then* was his Opportunity to practice his helliſh and envenom'd Malice upon my Soul, when I was in an utter incapacity of all poſſible Reſiſtance, filling me with ſuch *blaſphemous Thoughts, and Imaginations, ſo prodigiouſly vile and deteſtable*, that a wicked Heart muſt abhor and tremble at: So that my Bed, which to others affords comfortable Refreſhment, and ſhould have given me ſome eaſe to my languiſhing Body and tir'd Spirits, became to me a Dungeon of Fears, and Place of greateſt Torment. I even dreaded it as Hell it ſelf: There was no Night nor Day, no Time nor Place, in which theſe two ſworn Enemies of my Soul, *Satan and my Corruptions*, did not hunt me as a Partridge upon the Mountains; but was continually hurried up and down through the Mire and Filth of horrid Imaginations, corrupt and noyſome Luſts, which rent and tore my Soul, as if they would have devoured all its ſpiritual Life and Power; my *Corruptions* were too hard for me, and were at the very Door of ruining my Soul, and what to do I knew not. My Soul was become as parched Ground and an Habitation of Dragons, full of all abominable Luſts, and fiery *Temptations*: So that my Life abhorr'd Bread, and my Soul dainty Meat; my Fleſh was conſum'd away that it could not be ſeen, and my Bones which were not ſeen, ſtuck out; yea, my Soul drew near to the Grave, and my Life to the Deſtroyer: When I ſaid, My Bed ſhall comfort me, my Couch ſhall eaſe my Complaint; then was I ſcar'd with Dreams, and terrified with Viſions, ſo that my

Soul

Soul chose Strangling, and Death rather than Life. Yea, so worn and consum'd was I, that no brooking of Meat, quietness of Sleep, pleasure of Life, or almost any Sense was left in me, but appear'd a perfect Anatomy, expressing to the view nothing but Sinnews and Bones.

Now when these *Blasphemous Thoughts* of *God*, *Christ*, and the *Holy Spirit*, and *all the blessed and pure Inhabitants of Heaven*, began afresh to assault me, after I had had all those vast Experiences of God's Love, I verily thought that they were now written in Heaven's Books, in Characters of *Blood*, as being of a far more heinous and crimson Dye than all my former Provocations. If such or such an holy Soul, (said I) had but one of these *foul* and *fearful Thoughts* put into his Head, Oh! how would he twist and twine, be astonish'd and confounded! And here, through *Shame and Bashfulness*, my Tongue was so lock'd up, that I could disclose my Extremities to none, by which *Satan* won dreadful Advantages.

Now I had quite lost all Sight, and (to my Apprehension) all *Holdfast of Christ*; and whenever he occurr'd to my Mind, it was rather under the Notion of a *Judge* than a *Saviour*.

Wherefore by the violence of my Terrours, I was driven to the narrow search and reading of some Books, if happily I might meet with some Word of *Hope* to hang my sinking Soul upon; and seeing it pleas'd God, (who works infinitely at pleasure) to step out of the common Way in his Dealings with me, taking me more *immediately* into his own Hand, and *New-creating and Forming me* by the Power of his *Spirit*, that

upon the very firſt Senſe of the *Change*, I inſtantly look'd through all Means and Methods, intirely to *the firſt Cauſe*; yet I ſay, The bleſſed Work of my *Converſion* was wrought upon me, whilſt I was exercis'd in *Reading*, and hath ever ſince bleſs'd the ſame, to my wonderful Comfort and Confirmation. It will not therefore be amiſs to take notice, as I paſs along the ſeveral Inſtructions and Supports, which (by God's Bleſſing) I receiv'd from the Books I met with. By theſe, my Doubts have been reſolv'd, my Fears ſcatter'd; my Temptations met with, I am perſwaded, a thouſand times more effectually than if I could have diſclos'd my ſelf to the moſt able, experienc'd Soul Phyſitian in the World. I could meet with nothing, nothing that would come nigh my *Caſe* from the Pulpit. I often came home from Sermon with an hungry Soul, and bitterly wept and cry'd, *The young Children ask Bread, and none break it unto them.* Wherefore the Lord, in great Mercy to my Soul, caſt in my way many excellent Books; ſo to *Reading* and *Prayer* I gave my ſelf.

Now I began diligently to peruſe the *Life* of *John Bunyan*, which the Lord was pleas'd in great meaſure to make the Means of my Converſion. I there ſaw a variety of Wiles and Stratagems, which that *Old Serpent* had practiſed with him, as Temptations to *Atheiſm*, *Blaſphemy*, *Deſpair*, *Hardneſs of Heart*, *to Curſe and Swear*, *horrible Workings of exaſperated Corruptions*, and what not. But I could paſs over all theſe without taking the leaſt Comfort: This would not reach *my Caſe*, for I concluded my Circumſtances were of a quite different *Nature* and a *ſadder Hue*: Worthy regard, therefore, is that

that of *Luther*, who was so much verst in Spiritual Conflicts, says he, *It makes the Temptation much more grievous, when they which are thus afflicted feel that, which none else,* (as to them it seems) *do feel but they alone.* This was that which so terrified me, *I thought my Case was properly my own, and that none was ever in the like Condition.*

But Oh! I pray'd earnestly, that God would not lead me in the Steps of *John Bunyan*; for I began to find already, that warring and combating with *Satan*, would be no jesting, but sore and terrible Work. O! the unimagin'd Frights and Fears that did now beset me! I, that but now, was as it were, with *Paul*, rapp'd up into Paradise, by most sweet and familiar Communion with *Jesus*, and certified of my Title to eternal Glory, as though the visible Heavens had opened for my Reception, now look'd upon my self as ten times blacker than the damned Fiends in Hell, and did really imagine my self, to be at the head and foremost of a Crew of traiterous and rebellious Spirits going to Judgment. Such was the Power of Unbelief, Hardness of Heart against Christ, and *Despair*; that I thought I heard my sweet dear Jesus, even Jesus himself, often saying to me, *Mat.* 23. 33. *How can you escape the Damnation of Hell?*

And in the midst of these Wrestlings with my Spiritual Enemies I wanted not Vexation and Trouble from *Fellow-Creatures*, whose vain Lives and untoward Dispositions vex'd my Soul and doubled my Anguish. Ah! little did I think that Satan had such Instruments to beset and dog me at the Heels, so soon as I discover'd my Revolt from him, and slepp'd out of his enslav'd Kingdom

dom. Nor was I thus exercis'd, only now and then, but it meaſur'd me Day by Day; this added freſh Weight to my Sorrows, and made my inward Anguiſh the more intolerable. I remember once when I was moſt grievouſly provok'd in this manner, the Lord broke in upon me with that ſweet Scripture, *Heb.* 12. 3. *Conſider him that endur'd ſuch Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf, leaſt ye be weary and faint in your Minds.* O! this was a reviving Word! it came with mighty Power, and hath ever ſince at times ſhone before me! This then was my daily Company, and the beſt Comforters I had under thoſe diſmal Circumſtances! Thoſe, who one would have thought ſhould have endeavour'd to adminiſter ſome Relief to me, or at leaſt might have forborn to *add Sorrow to him whom the Lord had wounded*, (for my Caſe might have been read in my very Countenance, and any one might ſee that the Hand *of God preſs'd me ſore*, what elſe could mean thoſe *Sobs* and *Sighs*, thoſe *Tears* and *Groans*, thoſe *ghaſtly Looks* and *trembling Joints?*) prov'd the continual Renewers of my Dolours, and of Friends became Tormentors: Oh! thought I, *is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by, behold and ſee if there be any Sorrow like to my Sorrow!* But the *natural Man* diſcerns not the Things that be of God, becauſe they are *ſpiritually* diſcern'd; ſo that as I was forc'd to cry out with *Paul*, *O wretched Man that I am! Who ſhall deliver me from this Body of Death!* Rom. 7. 24. ſo with *David* to lament and ſay, *Wo is me! that I dwell in Meſhek and ſojourn in the Tents of Kedar!*

Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous, but out of them all the Lord will deliver him.

And

And whilſt Satan and his Inſtruments thus roar'd on the one Hand, my own *Corruptions* rag'd as much on the other, that I was juſt like the troubled Sea, continually caſting up Mire and Dirt; thus was I toſs'd up and down by the Enemies of my Soul, that I could neither ſit nor lye, nor go at eaſe or quiet; ſometimes the Injections from Satan and *blaſphemous Filth* would even diſtract me, and then the *inward impetuous Workings of my own Corruptions*, ſo that all I could do, was only *to ſtand under the Stroke of them.*

Yet was I not left without all Relief; I had ſome glimmering Hopes and Drops of Comfort in theſe dark and deſperate Plunges, as that in *Iſaiah* 57. 16. *I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrath, for the Spirit ſhould fail before me, and the Soul that I have made.* I never taſted more Sweetneſs in any Promiſe in the Book of God, or felt nearer Approaches of the Divine Preſence, but it would not abide with me; and *Iſaiah* 54. 11. and 35. 10. and the whole 33d Chapter of *Job*, would give me ſome Encouragement, and draw Tears from my Eyes; that alſo in 1 *Cor.* 10, and 13. took ſome hold on me, *There hath no Temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common to Man*; for this was the Conceit I was ſo ſtrongly poſſeſs'd with, *That none was ever in the like Condition.* And now I often thought upon *Rev.* 12. 12. *The Devil is come unto you in great Wrath, becauſe he knows he hath but a ſhort time.* This was it that ſharpen'd the Edge of my Sorrows, baniſh'd *Hope*, and encourag'd *Deſpair*; for all this while I walk'd upon the Precipice of *Eternity*, looking every Moment when

when I ſhould launch out into that boundleſs and bottomleſs Ocean.

Yet Satan prevail'd and got Ground upon me daily, he ſtill follow'd me with his terrifying fiery Darts without Intermiſſion; but whatever I *did*, *read*, *heard*, *thought*, *ſpoke*, *touch'd* or *look'd upon*, was preſently wreſted and empoyſon'd with *blaſphemous Temptations*; if I heard but the leaſt Noiſe, or any one talking, I was forc'd to ſtop my Ears, or preſently ſome *blaſphemous Thought* would dart into my Mind and wound my Soul; but they ruſh'd upon me with the moſt urgent and dreadful Impetuouſneſs when I was engag'd in *Duty*, *Prayer*, *Reading* eſpecially; and the Reaſon thereof I have ſometimes thought was, becauſe Satan apprehended (*That*) to be the moſt likely Means to extricate me out of my Entanglements. *Hearing the Word*, *ſinging of Pſalms*, (that noble Employment!) and *Meditation*, when I was engag'd in theſe Spiritual and Divine Exerciſes, (as in one or other I was always) then *blaſphemous Ideas* and *vile Fictions* about the *moſt holy*, *for ever bleſſed and ador'd Trinity*, would ſtrangely poſſeſs my Mind and diſtract my Thoughts.

Yea, with ſuch an *horrible*, *monſtrous Conceit and Injection* did Satan one Night fill my Imagination, that I could neither ſit, nor ſtand, nor go, but was juſt as one (poſſeſs'd by him) toſſing up and down in a diſtracted Amazedneſs, rowling and tumbling for Horror and Anguiſh of Spirit, my Legs even ſunk under me, and being all over in a Sweat, as tho' I had been juſt in a Bath, (thro' Exceſs of Dread and Terror) I fell into a ſtrange and fearful Trembling, thinking no leſs than that I had ſinn'd the *unpardonable Sin*, and had

had been guilty of *Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*. O! the gloomy, diſmal, fearful Apprehenſions I was under! I ſtood quivering upon the Brink of the Infernal Pit, looking when Hell would claim her own.

Whereupon the next Day I immediately had recourſe to Mr. *How's Redeemers Tears wept over loſt Souls*, (amongſt which Number I now accounted my ſelf free) wherein is given ſome ſatisfactory Account about that dreadful *Sin*; but Oh! how unconceivably did it revive me when I was made hereby to underſtand *that I had not been guilty of it!* only by the way I would obſerve with what infernal Cruelty Satan doth rack poor unexperienc'd Souls when God a little looſens his Chains; into what an intricate Maze of Horror and confus'd Diſtractions was I here plung'd!

'But, ſays Mr. *Howe*, for them who have not 'committed it, (meaning the *unpardonable Sin*) 'and who are conſequently capable of Benefit by 'what ſhould be made known about it, there is 'therefore enough made known for their real 'Uſe and Benefit.

'It will firſt be of real Uſe to many ſuch to 'know their Danger of running into it, *&c.*

'It may ſecondly be of great Uſe to others that 'are afflicted with very torturing Fears! eaſt *they 'have committed it*, to know that *they have not*, and 'they have enough alſo to ſatisfy themſelves in 'the Caſe, for that very *Fear*, with its uſual Con-'comitants in ſuch afflicted Minds, is an Argu-'ment to them that they (*have not*;) whilſt they 'find in themſelves any Value of Divine Favour, 'any Dread of his Wrath, any Diſpoſition to con-'ſider the State of their Souls, with any Thoughts

'or

'or Deſign of turning to God, they have Reaſon
'to conclude God hath hitherto kept them out of
'that fearful Gulph, and is yet in the Way and
'in Treaty with them; for ſince we are not ſuffi-
'cient to think any thing that is good of our
'ſelves, it is much more reaſonable to aſcribe
'any ſuch Thought or Agitation of the Spirit to
'him than to our ſelves, and to account that he
'is yet at work with us, at leaſt in the way of
'common Grace; tho' when our Thoughts drive
'towards a Concluſion againſt our ſelves that we
'*have committed that Sin*, and towards *Deſpair*
'thereupon, we are to apprehend a Mixture of
'*Temptation* in them, which we are concern'd ear-
'neſtly to watch and pray againſt; and yet even
'ſuch Temptation is an Argument of ſuch an ones
'*not having committed that Sin*; for ſuch as the
'Devil may apprehend more likely to have com-
'mitted it, he will be the leſs apt to trouble with
'ſuch Thoughts, not knowing what the Iſſue of
'that Unquietneſs may prove, and apprehending
'it may occaſion their eſcaping quite out of his
'Snare.

None but thoſe that know the Terrors of the Lord, and have felt themſelves the Intolerableneſs of a wounded Conſcience, and the ſtrange Agonies of *Deſparation!* they only can imagine what lightſome Refreſhment ſprang into my dark and dolorous Heart at the reading of theſe Lines! which before was poſſeſs'd with Trembling, and drown'd in *Deſpair*. O! the Craftineſs and Cruelty with which Satan torments an hopeleſs Heart and racks a wounded Spirit whilſt unacquainted with his Depths and Subtilty! Oh then it is that he repreſents to the Eye of the awaken'd Conſcience every Mote as a Mole-hill,

every

every Mole-hill as a Mountain, and the leaſt Sin too great to be forgiven. Oh! how were all my former Sins now ſet in order before me, with their killing Aggravations and Circumſtances, ready every Moment to ſink me into Hell! I now read in the Book of my terrify'd Conſcience, with a trembling Soul, the former wilful Provocations of my Life, the innumerable Swarms of deteſtable Thoughts which alway revell'd in my Heart without Controul, and all this againſt *Light* and *Knowledge*, *Checks of Conſcience*, *Admonitions of Friends*, *Convictions and Strivings of the Spirit*, *Wooings*, *Entreaties and Beſeechings of Miniſters*, *Warnings and Invitations from the Word*, yea, the *Stream* and *Current* of a *Pious Education*. Oh! ſays I, had they been *Sins* of *Ignorance* I ſhould not have ſo much fear'd the Refuſal of Pardon; but alas! Did I not know with a full Conviction, that every time I committed them I broke God's Law, incurr'd his Wrath, and run againſt the Light and Interdicts of *Conſcience*, which ſtood in my Way like an armed Man? This now was the cutting Aggravation *of my Sins*, for which I thought none could parallel them, *they were all along committed againſt Light* and *Knowledge*; nay, which is a thouſand times worſe, did I not ſometimes ſin with that bold and daring Folly (as tho' poſſeſs'd with the Devil) as to ſay within my ſelf, *The more groſly and heinouſly I now ſin, the more will God's Grace be magnify'd in pardoning me hereafter?* The very Top of Preſumption! beyond which a Man cannot go. I wonder not now that I was fill'd with ſuch Horror and Aſtoniſhment at the ſerious Review of theſe Things, but much rather wonder

at

at *unparallelable Grace!* that I ſuffer'd not the Vengeance of Eternal Fire.

Now under this dreadful Amazement of Soul, ariſing from the Guilt of my former Works of Darkneſs brought home upon me, I would re-examine the Account of *John Bunyan*, and conſider and compare my Caſe with his; I ſaw the Sins that he was guilty of in the Days of his Unregeneracy were many, and of a Crimſon Dye, but that which would ſtill ſtrike cold to my Heart, and forbid me to take any Encouragement therefrom, was, that his were committed in *Ignorance*, as himſelf confeſſeth, and was deſtitute of that *Light* and *Knowledge* and *Strivings of the Spirit*, *Counſel of faithful* and *godly Friends*, *holy and religious Education* and *Examples*, as I have enjoy'd from my very Cradle! Oh! I ſaw his Sins were *nothing*, *nothing to mine*; beſides, ſays I, he liv'd many a Year after, and prov'd eminently ſerviceable to the Church of Chriſt, brought much Glory to God, and diſcover'd a tender Concern for the Welfare of Immortal Souls; but as for me, Wretch! *I am ready every Moment to drop into the Grave*. Oh! that I had but turn'd to God ſooner, and not thus defer'd it and put it off, and run it to ſuch a deſperate Hazard! I have wretchedly miſ-ſpent the Flower of my Days in the bitter Ways of Sin and Folly, waſted my Health and precious Time in the forlorn Drudgery of Satan, till I could almoſt ſin no longer: *What Service can God now poſſibly receive from me? What Glory?* Then that ſweet place, *Rom.* 11. 6. glanc'd upon my Soul; *If by Grace, then it is no more of Works, otherwiſe Grace is no more Grace.*

And

And as I thought his *Sins*, ſo alſo his *Temptations*, *Fears*, *Terrors*, *Aſſaults from Satan*, were nothing comparable to mine! Now the *Graſhopper became a Burden*, and even the Fore-thought of the leaſt Hurry of *Worldly Buſineſs* was ready to ſink me into the Ground, ſo weak and languiſhing that I could ſcarce go up Stairs and down, thro' continual *Sighs* and *Groans*.

Thus I went on for a long time in unſpeakable Anguiſh of Mind, with a Conſcience parch'd with a Senſe of Divine Wrath, and a Soul all inflam'd! And methought the Lord had ſet a Mark upon me, as upon *(Cain)* even continual *Fear and Trembling*, and was become a *Magor Miſſabib*, a Terror to my ſelf, and to all about me; I fear'd God would make me an extraordinary Example of his Juſtice and Judgment to the World, and that I ſhould die a Spectacle of his Wrath and Vengeance for a *Warning to all wilful and preſumptuous Sinners*. And here again behold the unweariable Malice of the Enemy of *Souls!* when by the unceſſant Agonies of my bleeding Soul, and the fiery Darts of that wicked One, my Spirits were quite gone, and my Fleſh conſum'd, I ſhould lay down my Head but the leaſt Moment upon my Arm to preſerve almoſt expiring Nature, do you think this relentleſs Tormentor would tolerate it? No, by no means: *What!* ſays he, *is this a time to roul your ſelf upon your ſlothful Bed, and ſay, Soul, take thine Eaſe?* O! the marvellous Workings and Agitations of Spirit, I perpetually endur'd! But ſometimes that Word would be brought to my Mind, *He that believes ſhall not make haſte*, Iſa. 28. 16.

Now as to Relief from *Reading* I could get none, for Satan ſo fill'd my black Imagination with

with *blaſphemous Ideas* and *horrid Conceptions of God* and *the ever bleſſed Jeſus*, that every Word I read, inſtead of comforting me, would ſeize me with freſh Horror, and throw me as it were into a new Agony of Spirit! Thus was I hew'd and hack'd by Satan and my own inteſtine Luſts, often crying out with the deepeſt Anguiſh, (as I find many poor Souls have done before me, and I am afraid will do ſo (tho' unreaſonably) ſtill) *That no Caſe was ever like to mine.* And thus whilſt Satan was permitted to keep me in *Ignorance* he held me in unimaginable Torments.

Now when by the Violence of my Corruptions and Temptations all *former Experiences*, (tho' ſo marvellouſly *powerful* and miraculouſly *gracious*) were perfectly obliterated, or diſown'd and diſbeliev'd, ſo that now I concluded my ſelf no other than in a *Natural State*, and upon whom had ne'er paſs'd a *Saving Change*; I ſay, when I did here long, and wiſh, and cry, *Oh! that I had but a new Heart, a new Nature!* Oh! that I could but get into a *State of Grace!* Why, what then, ſaid Satan? *Suppoſe you ſhould, if but (one) of theſe Thoughts ſhould paſs thro' your Mind between that time and your dying Hour*, (and there's no doubt of that) *then all will be loſt again, and your Caſe will be more deplorable and hopeleſs than ever.* This, this was ſtill the *cutting Thought*, and added ſuch an Accent to my Miſery, to think that *theſe blaſphemous Thoughts*, and *ſuch Strength of Corruptions, were utterly inconſiſtent* with a *State of Grace*, and yet that I ſhould *never be freed from them*, I thought it was impoſſible it ſhould ever be better with me than it was, but muſt inevitably periſh in that dreadful Condition. O! the exquiſite Anguiſh of a deſpairing Conſci-

ence!

ence! O! the inward Agonies and Convulsions of Soul! at the doleful Apprehension of Eternal Condemnation! How often did I think I heard the Lord giving Commission to Satan concerning me, saying, *Hang on his Chains for ever.*

All this while I thought there was but a Moment as it were between me and that *awful Tribunal*, still follow'd with Temptations and new Horrors of Mind, like the Waves and Billows of the Sea.

But in such Distress as I was, here's worse to succeed; low enough, the Lord knows, was I already sunk, but this insatiable Tyrant would ne'er willingly give out, till he had dragg'd me to the lowest Hell. *This Enemy of ours, says* Luther, *will give us no Breathing, no time of Rest.* The Ephah of my Sorrow was not yet filled up, so unweary'd is he in his Pursuit of such as are *pluck'd as Firebrands out of the Burning.*

Now I am fall'n into the Heat of the Engagement, and am come to the very *Powder-Plot* of Hell; Satan had all this while been making his Advances, and laying his Soul-murdering Mines and Stratagems, facilitating his Approaches, and preparing for a *General Storm*; he had wofully wounded and weaken'd my *Faith*, desperately enrag'd and exasperated my *Corruptions*, and brought me to the very Gates of *Death*, and now, says Satan, I will follow home the Stroke and the Day is mine.

Wherefore now to ply the Advantage, and put his hellish Projects in execution, he gave me a most sore and dreadful Blow, which at once had like to have prov'd the irrecoverable Ruin of Body and Soul, had not Christ sustain'd me with everlasting Arms. Ah! the Lord sat in

in the Heavens and had him in deriſion; and it was this.

When I was in the depth of my Temptations and that very Time overſet with the reſiſtleſs Violence of my Corruptions, I happen'd to meet with a Book of Dr. *Scot*, which at firſt I greedily catcht at, hoping therein to find ſome Support and Comfort to my oppreſſed Spirit. But indeed it was to me, as Salt rubb'd in a freſh Wound, it prov'd a biting Corroſive to my bleeding Soul; enrag'd the Smart, and doubled the Horrour of my already wounded terrified Conſcience. And thus,

'There are (ſays Dr. *Scot*) ſome Men who 'believe themſelves to be *Converted*, meerly be'cauſe they have run through all the Stages of 'Paſſion, in the new road of artificial Converſi'on, which ſome modern Authors have found 'out: For according as the Work of Converſi'on hath been deſcrib'd by ſome modern Au'thors, it is wholly plac'd in ſo many different 'Scenes of Paſſion. For firſt, a Man muſt paſs 'under the Diſcipline of the Law, and the Spirit 'of Bondage: That is, He muſt be frighted into a 'Senſe of his loſt and undone Condition; and 'in this Senſe he muſt grieve bitterly for his 'Sins, as the Cauſe of his Ruin and Perdition; 'and this is that which they call, *Conviction* and '*Compunction*; from hence he muſt proceed into '*the Evangelical State*, the Entrance of which, 'is *Contrition* or *Humiliation*; which conſiſts in 'an ingenious Sorrow for Sin, proceeding from 'a paſſionate Senſe of God's Love and Goodneſs; 'and then having acted over all theſe mournful 'Paſſions, he embraces and lays hold on *Chriſt*, 'which is the concluding Scene, and is alto-

'gether

'gether made up of Joy and Exultation; and 'ſo the *Work of Converſion* is finiſh'd. Now, 'though I deny not, but to the Converſion of 'an habitual Sinner, it is indiſpenſably neceſ-'ſary that he ſhould be convinc'd of his Dan-'ger, and deeply affected with ſorrow and re-'morſe, for his Folly and Wickedneſs; yet nei-'ther do I doubt, but that by the help of a me-'lancholy Fancy, attended with ſoft and eaſy 'Paſſions, a Man may perform all theſe Parts of '*Converſion*, and yet be never the better for it. 'For many times theſe Paſſions are only the ne-'ceſſary Effects of a diſeaſed Fancy, and are al-'together as mechanical as the beating of our 'Pulſe, and the Circulation of our Blood. And 'here you may obſerve in the modern Stories of 'our religious Melancholians, that they com-'monly paſs out of one Paſſion into another, 'without any Reaſoning or Diſcourſe: Now 'they are in the depth of Grief and Deſpair, by 'and by upon the Pinnacle of Joy and Aſſu-'rance, and yet they are the ſame Men, neither 'better nor worſe, when they do deſpair as 'when they are aſſur'd, and conſequently have 'no more reaſon to be aſſur'd now, than they 'had when they were encompaſs'd with all the 'Horrours of Deſparation. For the only reaſon 'why any Man hath to be aſſur'd of God's Fa-'vour, is, his Likeneſs and Conformity to him; 'which is that alone which endears us to God, 'and entitles us to the Promiſes of his Favour, 'and yet though theſe Men do not pretend to be 'better or more Godlike, now they are aſſur'd, 'than they were when they deſpair'd, yet their 'Hearts are overwhelm'd with Floods of Senſi-'tive Joy, and they are ſtrangely Comforted,

'they

'they know not how or wherefore; and 'though when they were in Deſpair they 'thought on theſe Promiſes and Motives 'of Comfort that now raviſh and tranſport 'them, and had every whit as much reaſon 'to lay claim to them too, yet then they lay 'like Cakes of Ice at their Hearts, with-'out affording them the leaſt Gleam of Warmth 'or Comfort, which is a plain Evidence that 'both their Joys and Sorrows are the Products 'of Bodily Temper.——And this kind of Con-'verſion doth commonly begin and end with 'ſome languiſhing Diſtemper of the Body, in 'which the Fancy is over-clouded, and the Mo-'tion of the Blood and Spirits retarded by the 'Prevalence of black and melancholy Humours. '———The Generality of Men being ignorant 'of the Power of Melancholy, and the Frame 'and Structure of their own Bodies, if their 'Fancies are but tinctur'd with Religion, they 'will be apt to attribute every extraordinary 'Emotion they feel to the immediate Influence 'of the Spirit of God, and to account that to 'be Grace and Inſpiration which is the meer 'neceſſary Effect of Matter and Motion.

But no more of this *uncomfortable Diſcourſe*, for Satan had like to have made uſe of it to my Everlaſting Overthrow! This had been the laſt Blow of the Battel, and I utterly overcome there-by, had I not been upheld by Omnipotent Love! For being at this preſent reduc'd to a languiſhing Condition of Body by my Soul Afflictions, and the Spirit of God in my Converſion working upon me in a more powerful and immediate Way than ordinary, I ſtraightway concluded (as Satan would have me) that it was even *ſo* with

me,

me, and that all that I had paſs'd thro' was nothing elſe but the *meer Reſult of Bodily Paſſions*, and a Train of fanciful Imaginations and Chimera's of the Brain. Oh! Who can conceive the Terrors of theſe Days but my ſelf! When Satan had once prevail'd upon me to believe that there was no true *Ground-work* or *Foundation*, but had gone all along upon Fancies and Deluſions, he blew me up and down by every Blaſt of Temptation at his Pleaſure. Oh! ſays I, (and groan'd in Spirit) have I been quite out of the Road all this while, and am now to ſet out for my Journey, when the Sun of my Life is juſt ſet! Ah! What can I do! What Courſe ſhall I take! Here was I loſt in an Abyſs of Diſtractions. O! the endleſs Windings and Turnings of that Old Serpent! when God knows, and I am now indubitably aſſur'd, triumphantly above all Doubt, that they were the mighty Footſteps and Goings-forth of his own moſt glorious Spirit upon my Soul; but this I could by no means then believe, but took the Word of the Father of Lies.

Wherefore down I ſunk, deep indeed into the horrid and diſmal Gulph of *Deſpair*, encompaſs'd with nothing but Darkneſs and Death! I now look'd down into that dreadful Abyſs of Infernal Spirits, and ſaw the endleſs Maze and Labyrinth of the Damned's Torments, the perpetual Revolutions of their unconceivable Miſery, without any Intermiſſion or Mitigation, all Horror, Confuſions and Diſtractions; in the utmoſt Region of which fearful Chaos, in the fierceſt Flaſhings of that burning Tophet, in the loweſt Dungeon, in the bottomleſs Pit, where is Blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever, I thought I beheld, (by way of Anticipation) my wretched

forſaken Soul hurry'd up and down by inſulting Fiends in an Eternal Circle of Anguiſh and Woe, inclos'd and ſhut up, without any Hope or Poſſibility of ever coming out, and had nothing but the confus'd Howlings, and Screeches, and Gnaſhings, the hideous inceſſant Bannings and Blaſphemies of deſpairing tormented Souls continually ſounding in my Ears, and the Flames of Hell before my Eyes; Oh! I roar'd out in the Bitterneſs of my Spirit, as one unable to wreſtle with the Terrors of the Almighty: *Now I may pray, but* (pointing downwards) *there will be no room for Prayer, and 'tis but a very little while and then I ſhall make one among thoſe damned Ghoſts.* The Lord knows at this time I had almoſt as little Hope of Salvation, or any Comfort whatſoever, *as thoſe that are eternally ſhut up in the Pit!* I look'd upon my ſelf as a *gone Creature, gone to all Eternity*; I counted every Sermon I heard *my laſt*, every time I ſaw a faithful Miniſter of Chriſt *my laſt*, every Day *my laſt*; *this*, ſays I, *may be the Evening of my Day of Viſitation*; and Oh! thought I, where are the Everlaſting Habitations prepar'd for my Soul; O! the Agonies and Pangs! the griping Tortures! the deſpairful Sighings! the pining Groans! the Throws of Conſcience! the hopeleſs Tears! the doleful bitter Outcries and fearful Expectations of Wrath, which continually beſet me round, and took up their Dwelling within me! O! the Ghaſtlineſs, the Anguiſh, the frightful Thoughts and ſtrange Languiſhings which ſeiz'd and poſſeſs'd me whilſt I was thus rent and torn with the fiery flaming Arrows of God and poyſonful Darts of the Devil; I ſtood hovering over the Abyſs of a dreadful *Eternity*, looking every Moment

ment to be engulph'd! Oft now did I ſend up theſe Words to Heaven with ſtrong Cries and piercing Ejaculations, *Oh! that it might yet be the accepted Time! that it might yet be the Day of Salvation!* O! the hideous Roaring of my tormented Conſcience! O! the pitiful Groanings of my wounded Spirit! O! the ſorrowful Sighings of my deſpairing Heart! I thought as ſure as I had a living Soul it would be damn'd to all Eternity; my watry Eyes from Morning to Night, my pale Cheeks, my agaſt Looks, my weak and trembling Joints, ſpoke out to *all* the unfeign'd Depth of my Spiritual Dolors.

Now would theſe Scriptures pierce me thro', *Prov.* 1. 24. *Becauſe I call'd and you refus'd, I ſtretch'd out my Hand but you regarded not, I alſo will laugh at your Calamity, and mock now your Fear is come; now you may call, but I will not anſwer, you may ſeek me early, but you ſhall not find me.* And *Iſa.* 1. 15. *Jer.* 2. 17, 19. and 4. 18. and then that in *Jer.* 4. 14. the 13th and latter end of the 27th, would melt me into Tears.

Once, having been harraſs'd by the Devil all the Day long, I ſat down at Night, and taking the Bible into my Hand, I caſt my Eye upon *Jer.* 15. 4. *Then ſaid the Lord, tho' Moſes and Samuel ſtood before me, yet my Mind could not be towards this People, caſt them out of my Sight, and let them go forth.* This was a cutting Word to me the Lord knows, methought God meant me, as if he had ſaid, 'I will hearken to no Terms, I cannot 'be reconcil'd to him, my Soul abhors him, caſt 'him out of my Sight. And I think the very next Morning I had that flaming Place faſten'd upon me, *Rom.* 9. 22. *What if God, willing to ſhew his Wrath, and make his Power known, endure with much*

Long-ſuffering the Veſſels of Wrath fitted for Deſtruction. So worry'd was I by this helliſh Tyger, that whenever I got me any Book to ſee if by ſearching I might find ſome good Word of Hope, he preſently ſuggeſted to me that my increaſing Knowledge would but increaſe my Sorrow, and that every Sermon I heard would aggravate my approaching Damnation. One time coming Home from Sermon I eagerly graſp'd (the Bible) in my Hand, and with many Tears paſſionately cry'd out, *Oh! What muſt I be loſt everlaſtingly with this Book in my Hand, which ſo plainly diſcovers to me the Way of Life? Muſt I go to Hell by the Gates of Heaven?* And here Mr. *Howe's Redeemers Tears wept over loſt Souls* was of unſpeakable Uſe to me; I bleſs God that ever that Book came to my Hands, it prov'd a mighty Preſervative of *Hope*, and kept me from *giving over and lying down in utter Deſpair.*

And whilſt I was thus conflicting with the *Terrors of God*, ah! how I ſpurn'd at *this World*, both its Favours and Frowns, and made no more Account of Men than Graſhoppers; the *World* now look'd in its native Dreſs and true Colours, but oh how deſpicable it appear'd! how vain, empty, and utterly unfit to anſwer the Neceſſities and ſatisfy the Cravings of a reaſonable immortal Spirit.

Wherefore ſtill I went on, continually ruminating upon my ſad Condition; Reſtleſneſs, deep Thoughtfulneſs, continual Heavineſs, Anxiety and Solicitude of Soul, attended me whereever I went and whatever I did; *Thoughts of my State* lay down with me and roſe with me, and accompany'd me all the Day long: And here whilſt I was in the midſt of theſe Storms and Tem-

Tempests, the Lord kept me from falling on those dangerous Rocks, upon which Thousands split and are lost for ever. *Under Trouble of Conscience, says Dr.* Owen, *they will fix on something that cannot cure their Disease, but only make them forget that they are sick; they turn aside to Creature Diversions and Worldly Employments, as* Saul *to Musick and* Cain *to building a City. They make Death, says worthy Mr.* Howe, *their Cure of Pain, and to avoid the Fear of Hell leap into it.* But I bless God it was not so with me under my Extremities, so far was I from that, and so exceeding tender was my Conscience, that I would not allow Things *lawful* in themselves and *innocent* by any means in the least to be a Diversion from my Distress; I knew this must be issu'd between God and me. *Lord, thought I, to whom can I go but unto thee, thou only hast the Words of Eternal Life.* As *Reuben* cry'd, *The Child is not, and I, whither shall I go?* So did I now cry, *The Love of God is not, Christ is not, and I, whither shall I cause my Sorrow to go?* Nothing, nothing could stand me in his stead, nothing could supply the Place of *a Redeemer*, or compensate for the Loss of *Divine Love*; wherefore to God, with the Neglect of all Carnal Supports, made I all my Applications, I went to him by Prayer again and again, and again, that he might have no Rest: Thou, Lord, hast wounded, said I, and thou alone canst heal.

This made *Spira* to cry out, (when his Friends sought to relieve him by Physick and other Means and Helps of Nature) *Alas! poor Men, how far wide are you, do you think that this Disease is to be cur'd by Potions? Believe me, there must be another manner of Medicine, it is neither Plaister nor*

The wound made by Sin - Death,

Drugs that can help a fainting Soul caſt down with a Senſe of Sin and Wrath of God, it is only (Chriſt) that muſt be the (Phyſician,) and the (Goſpel) the Souls (Antidote.)

'Oh! in this Conflict alone, *(ſays a great Divine)* and woful Wound of Conſcience, no Electuary of Pearl or precious Balm, no Bezoar's Stone or Unicorn's Horn, or the moſt exquiſite Extraction that Alchimy or Art it ſelf can create, can any whit or at all revive, eaſe or aſſwage; Heaven and Earth, Men and Angels, Friends and Phyſick, Gold and Silver, Pleaſures and Preferments, Favour of Princes, nay, the utmoſt Poſſibility of the whole Creation, muſt let this alone for ever, an Almighty Hand and Infinite Skill muſt take this in hand, or elſe never any Cure or Recovery in this World or the World to come; it is only the Hand of the *Holy Ghoſt*, by the Blood of that Bleſſed Lamb *Jeſus Chriſt*, the holy and the righteous, *that can bind up ſuch a Bruiſe*; it is *Chriſt*, *Chriſt*, and nothing but *Chriſt that can comfort in this Confuſion of Spirit.*

This now I was ſenſible of, *ſo I gave my ſelf unto Prayer*, never ſo well as when alone at *Prayer*; I was much in ſecret Wreſtlings with God; where-ever I went, and whatever I did, ſtill my Soul was earneſtly pleading it at the Throne of Grace, *always in a praying Frame*, tho' ſtill I fear'd I was deſtitute of *Faith*; and tho' thro' Carnal Fear, and Shame, and *Baſhfulneſs*, heighten'd by Satan's Temptations, I could never unboſom my ſelf in my Diſtreſs to any one, yet by the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Grace and Supplication, I had that humble Freedom and holy Boldneſs given me in *ſecret Prayer*, that thereby

I have often eas'd my weary Soul in her bittereſt Agonies; *invaluable Mercy*, hither had I recourſe continually, from whence Satan's moſt deſperate Aſſaults could never drive me; yet ſometimes my Thoughts were ſo diſtracted, and Spirits quite gone, my Prayers mix'd with ſuch Unbelief, Hardneſs of Heart, and a World of Imperfections, that I ſhould have little Heart or Strength for a *ſet Prayer*.

Much about this Time I heard that a bleſſed Miniſter of Chriſt, with whom I had formerly ſome Acquaintance, was in Town; overjoy'd at the News whereof I reſolv'd immediately to go and make known my Condition to him, but alas! when I came into his Preſence my Tongue clave to the Roof of my Mouth, I could not utter one Word to him, and ſo Home I came as full of Anguiſh, and Horror, and Diſſatisfaction, as I went; however I got up very early next Morning, and to him I went again, but to as little purpoſe, for I was Tongue-ty'd, and could by no means declare my Mind; the Truth is, my Caſe was ſo ſtrange, uncouth and horrid, and my Temptations of that prodigious blaſphemous nature, that the one I could not expreſs, the other I dare not declare, and therefore it was utterly impoſſible I ſhould ever receive any Verbal Satisfaction about them; and ſo I took Leave of him, as never to ſee him more till he ſhould come with Chriſt and his Heavenly Train to triumph in my juſt Condemnation.

I had not gone, I think above a Week or Fortnight, in the bitterneſs of my Soul, but I bought Mr. *Marſhall's Goſpel Myſtery of Sanctification*, and turning it over very eagerly, I light on a Place where thus he writes: 'You are to

'be fully perſwaded, (*ſays he,*) of the All-'ſufficiency of *Chriſt* for the Salvation of your 'ſelf, and all that believe in him. That his 'Blood cleanſes from all Sin, 1 *John* 1. 7. 'though our Sins be never ſo great and horri-'ble, and continu'd in never ſo long, yet he is 'able to deliver us from this body of Death, and 'mortifie our Corruptions be they never ſo 'ſtrong. We find in Scripture, that abomina-'ble wicked Perſons have been ſav'd by him, '1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. Such as have ſinn'd againſt 'the Light of Nature, as the *Heathen*; and the 'Light of Scripture, as the *Jews*. Such as have 'denied *Chriſt*, as *Peter*; and perſecuted him, 'as *Paul*. Many that are fallen into great Sins 'are ruin'd for ever, becauſe they do not account 'the Grace of *Chriſt* ſufficient for their Pardon 'and Sanctification; when they think they are 'gone and paſt all hope of Recovery, that their 'Sins are upon them, and they pine away un-'der them, and how ſhall they live. *Ezek.* 33. '10. this Deſpair works ſecretly in many Souls 'without much trouble and horror, and makes 'them careleſs of their Souls and true Religion. 'The Devil, *ſays he*, fills ſome with *horrid, filthy, blaſphemous Thoughts*, on purpoſe that they 'may think their Sins too great to be forgiven, 'though commonly ſuch Thoughts are the leaſt 'of the Sins of thoſe that are peſter'd with 'them; and rather the Devil's Sins than theirs, 'becauſe they are hurried into them, ſore a-'gainſt their Wills; but if their Hearts be 'ſomewhat polluted by them, Chriſt teſtifies 'that all manner of Sin and Blaſphemy ſhall be 'forgiv'n unto Men, but the Blaſphemy againſt 'the *Holy Ghoſt*, *Mat.* 10. 31. and as for thoſe

'that

'that are guilty of Blaſphemy againſt the *Holy* 'Ghoſt, the reaſon why they are never forgiven, 'is not for want of Sufficiency in the Blood of 'Chriſt, and the pardoning Mercy of God, but 'becauſe they never repent of that Sin, 'and never ſeek to God for Mercy through 'Chriſt, but continue obſtinate till Death. I read no further, but immediately laid down the Book, and was fill'd with that Joy and Conſolation as I cannot report. Now I thought there might be ſome *Hopes* for me, and that my Sins were *pardonable*, for ſtill I concluded my ſelf *out of Chriſt*, and in an *Unjuſtified State*. Oh! I was ſure that my Sins and Temptations could never conſiſt with a *State of Grace*; but as horrid as they were, I have ſince found it to be otherwiſe; for I was all the while a true Member of *Jeſus Chriſt*, though then, with tears, I often ſaid, I was ſure it was impoſſible. But, inaſmuch as theſe Temptations haunted me ſtill, though not attended with that Horrour and Amazement of Spirit, by reaſon of Guilt, yet ſeeing they annoy'd me as much as ever, I began to queſtion all again, and to cry out after my wonted manner, *None was ever in my Caſe, none ſo horridly wicked as I.* O! the weeping, and wailing, and wringing of Hands! the bitter Agonies! the extream Anguiſh! the Dread and Terrour, and amazement of Spirit, which theſe *Blaſphemous Motions* would put me into! What twitches, and ſhootings, and tremblings would every *Blaſphemous Thought*, cauſe even in my outward Man: Neither were they any whit abated when I lay me down to reſt. *Sleep* I had none; Slumberings was all that I had for Months together; for I may ſafely affirm, that for four

Months at the leaſt, I had not one Wink of that ſound undiſturb'd Sleep as I was wont to enjoy in the Days of my *Unregeneracy*. (Let not any hereupon fancy the Commands of Chriſt to be harſh and greivous, or take up a Prejudice againſt his Ways, as melancholy and unpleaſant; for in my moſt deſperate Plunges I was ſo far from envying, that I pitied the moſt proſperous Sinner, and oft profeſs I would not change my bittereſt Tears for his loudeſt Laughter. Now if the darkeſt Night in the Chriſtian Life be ſo hopeful, what then is the Morning of God's return to the Soul; and what is the Noon of *Glory!*) and at theſe times *Satan* was moſt outragious, taking his Advantage from my utter inability to reſiſt; filling me, as I have ſaid, with *Blaſphemous Ideas* and *Tormenting Fictions*. But the Wrath of Devils ſhall praiſe God, and the remainder thereof he will reſtrain.

Now matters were come to that paſs, that it was not poſſible my Afflictions ſhould any longer be either diſſembled or conceal'd; for my Countenance was ſo chang'd, and the Viſage of my Face ſo alter'd, that if I met any of my former Acquaintance in the Streets, they did not know me. Now I was become the Subject of my Friends and Neighbours Talk; and what ail'd me, and what was the matter with me, was every ones enquiry. Some thought me poſſeſs'd with deep Melancholy: Others, not much looking after the Cauſe, took me to be in a deep Conſumption: Others again ſaid, I was the very Picture of *Death*. But I find that all agreed with me in this, *That I was not far from Eternity*.

Now

Now I was ſo far driven from Chriſt, and ſuch a wretched Eſtrangement was there between *him* and my Soul (through the impetuous inceſſant violence of my Temptations) that I was as if I had never known him, or had Experience of any of thoſe mighty Tranſactions with him. Ah, this was *Satan*'s main Drift and principal Deſign to *drive me from Chriſt*, becauſe he knew, The further I was from *Chriſt*, the weaker I ſhould be: My Heart was even ſhut up againſt *Chriſt*, and ſo *exceeding hard*, that if I would have given a *World* for a *truly penitent Tear*, I could not ſhed *One*: No Love, no Breathings after *Chriſt* could I find within me: Nay ſo far was it from that, That whenever I met with the *very Name of Chriſt, my dear and only Saviour*, I would endeavour, if poſſible, to ſhun and paſs it by, though ſometimes I ſhould have this impreſt upon my Spirit, *He muſt ſave you, if ever you are ſaved*. And as for the *Bleſſed Spirit*, ſo fill'd was my Imagination with Blaſphemous Filth, that I could never endure to look into the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, becauſe ſo much mention was there made of the *Holy Ghoſt*. Oh! whither, whither would *Satan* run us, were his Power as boundleſs as his Malice; nay, to that degree did he prevail upon me, that miſ-judging my State, and miſ-conſtruing an Expreſſion of Dr. *Owen*'s, where he ſays, *This Selfiſh-Earneſtneſs, at firſt to be thruſting our Hands into the Sides of Chriſt, is that which God will pardon in many, but accepts in none*. I ſay, taking this in a wrong Senſe, I pray'd earneſtly to God to pardon me for ever reaching out to *Chriſt*; poor Soul, really thinking that it was high Preſumption in me to pretend

tend to lay hold on *Chriſt*, ſo ſoon after my abominable Life; and when I had mourn'd, abas'd my ſelf, judg'd, accus'd, condemn'd my ſelf a little longer, then I would look to *Chriſt*. But my dear *Lord Jeſus*, as ſoon as he appear'd to me (which was not long after) both convinc'd me of my Folly, and graciouſly pardon'd me.

Now by this time my Body was brought to a very *Sceleton*, through the Terrours of the Lord that beſet me round, and his Arrows which ſtuck faſt in my Soul. So that at the latter end of *Auguſt*, 1706. I was forc'd into the Country to revive and recover almoſt expiring Nature. But the chief end I held in my Eye was to have recourſe to ſome Spiritual Phyſician for a Cordial for my fainting Soul, *For the Spirit of a Man will ſuſtain his Infirmity, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* And therefore went to a certain Miniſter under whom I was Educated, and with whom I thought I could uſe the moſt freedom. Before I went, I ſet down in a Paper, ſome of the diſmal Circumſtances I was then under, (particularly, that of *Blaſphemous Thoughts*, as alſo, that I was wholly at a loſs and uncertainty about my State, and could get no ſure Footing for my Soul) which the next Morning being Sabbath-day I gave to him. But to little purpoſe, for not the one half of my Caſe was told him, neither could I by any means unboſom my ſelf to him; ſo perplex'd and intricate were my Circumſtances. Whatever I told him, I had ſome ſecret Reſerves in my own Breaſt that would not out; and whatever he reply'd to me, I could eaſily except againſt it or evade it: As when in anſwer to my being afflicted with hor-

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rid Blaſphemous Injections, he took me by the Hand, and ſaid, *Don't deſpair, theſe are the Devil's Sins, not yours, don't deſpair*; and withall ſaid, That he had many in the Church under his Care, who had been ſorely aſſaulted with theſe *Blaſphemous Thoughts*, and the Lord had deliver'd them from them; and ſo he hop'd he would me. Whereupon, this precious Man of God immediately had recourſe to his Study, and pitch'd upon thoſe Words, *Iſa.* 32. 2. *And a Man ſhall be an hiding Place from the Wind, and a Covert from the Tempeſt; as Rivers of Waters in a dry Place, and as the ſhadow of a great Rock in a weary Land:* From which Words, he made a very ſuitable, affectionate and excellent Diſcourſe. But then *Satan* would ſoon ſtart that Faith-killing Objection in my Mind, *That mine were of a quite different Nature, and far more abominable than ever paſt through the Heart of Man; and if Perſons did but know them they would utterly abhor me.* Oh! 'tis a fearful thing and cuts to the very Heart, when we can't be perſwaded but that our Caſe is *ſingular*, and *that none were ever in the like plight*; wherefore ſtill the Sore continued feſter'd inwardly. Divert your Thoughts, *(ſays he)* to any thing that is lawful, and the Devil will be weary of ſuggeſting, when he ſees you don't mind him. You can't poſſibly pleaſe him more, than to be caſt down: He hath obtain'd a great End if he can but tire out your Spirits. Be chearful; But above all, *Believe in Chriſt, act Faith on Chriſt.* Good Advice it was, and moſt ſuitable: But I, alas, was like the Lame Man at the Pool of *Bethesday*; he might as well have bid me pluck down a Star, I thought, or drink up the Ocean, as *believe in Chriſt.* I

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was far enough from that in my own Apprehenſions. I had no Inclination to him, no Love for him, my Heart was as dead as a Stone, quite bolted and barr'd againſt any *Motion Chriſtward*. Tho I was driven to the moſt preſſing Extremity, I could not diſcover to my ſelf the Exerciſe of Saving Grace. I could not believe, nor I could not repent. And here I ask'd one the meaning of thoſe Words of *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 16. 22. *If any Man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be Anathema Maranatha.* Thinking no leſs, than that that dreadful Curſe belong'd to me; for my Heart (through the continual iteration of Temptation) was almoſt become (I tremble to ſay it) *hardned againſt Chriſt.*

Thus did the Lord withdraw himſelf, and leave me for a while to the Terrours of *an inviſible Conflict*; to make me ſenſible of my own Weakneſs, to abate my Pride, and to make me *look to the Rock that is higher than I.* O! how did all the Powers of Darkneſs combine to deſtroy my *new-born Soul*, and to cruſh it in its *Infant State.* But O admirable diſplay of *Chriſt's* glorious *Power*, infinite *Wiſdom* and matchleſs *Love!* to preſerve and keep alive ſuch a *Spark of Grace*, in an overflowing Deluge of *Corruption* and *Sin*, and roaring Tempeſts of *Infernal Aſſaults*, till he chang'd the Storm into a pacifick Calm: For now comes the comfortable Dawn, after this long, black, tempeſtuous, and (to my then thinking) everlaſting Night: As a great Divine well obſerves, ſays he, *The loweſt degree of Humiliation under God's mighty Hand, is the neareſt Step to riſing and extraordinary exultation of Spirit; the extreameſt Darkneſs of Spiritual Deſertion, is wont to go immediately before the glorious*

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Sunriſe of heavenly Light, and unutterable Lightſomeneſs in the Soul.

The very Morning I return'd out of the Country, being 2d of *September*, by a ſudden Accident in the Street I was wak'd out of my Sleep about 2 a Clock, and methought I ſaw the Heavens open'd before me: Whereupon I inſtantly rais'd up my ſelf in a moſt ſtrong and fervent Ejaculation to *Chriſt*, and ſaid, *Lord, Grant me thy Spirit, and the free uſe of thy Word*, which as I have ſaid, I could not look into, but every Word would be preſently wreſted from me, and my Mind poſſeſt with *Filth and Blaſphemy*. I was alſo much in Prayer to God on this account, the Day before, which it pleas'd the Lord graciouſly to anſwer; but in ſo eminent a Manner as was incredibly above all Expectation. I found no help come for the preſent; but a Day or two after I came home, as I was looking in the Bible, rememb'ring my earneſt and important Requeſt, I light on the 15th Chap. of *John*, *ver.* 1, to 5. *I am the true Vine, my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that bears not fruit, he takes away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the Word that I have ſpoken to you.* Abide *in me, and I in you; as the branch can't bring forth fruit, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, except ye* abide *in me. I am the Vine, ye are the Branches, he that* abides *in me, and I in him, the ſame brings forth much fruit, FOR WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING.* It may be at another time I might have read theſe Words fifty times over, and have felt no more Power, nor taſted more Sweetneſs in them, than in any other Scripture. But now the time, the ſet time

time was come, and pretious Words they were to my Soul. No Tongue can tell, no Heart can think, what raviſhing comfort and lightſome gladneſs they brought along with them. O! what a *Change* was there in a Moment! It ſeem'd to me like a *ſecond Converſion!* In an inſtant my former Experiences were brought to mind, by which I was made to ſee, that that great and bleſſed Work of *Faith* was wrought in my Heart by the Spirit of God, tho' now it was obſcur'd and weakn'd by manifold Corruptions and Temptations; and I began to muſe upon former Manifeſtations, and to call to mind the Days of the Right-hand of the moſt High, with unexpreſſible Joy! I was made to ſee, that I had been enabled from above, willingly and chearfully, abſolutely and unreſervedly, to give up my ſelf to *Chriſt*, and to truſt in him for all *Salvation*. I found, the farther Unbeleif prevail'd, the more Corruption got ground: 'Tis true Faith muſt purify the Heart. I ſaw, that as God in Sovereign Grace had ſnatch'd me as a Brand out of the Burning, and drawn me to his *Son*, ſo I muſt continually depend upon him for freſh Supplies, and that if he left me to my ſelf, I could not ſtand a moment. Oh! I ſaw and heartily acknowledg'd, that all my Sufficiency was of *Chriſt*, and all of *Grace*, from firſt to laſt. And from this very Day I was never ſeiz'd with ſuch Agonies and hidious Terrours.

Yet ſtill I had my Ebbings as well as Flowings, and ſometimes the dark as well as the bright ſide of the Cloud, more than intimating, that I was not yet out of the reach of Temptation, nor beyond the Devil's Gun-ſhot. However my Soul was riſing out of its Depths, and God was

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ſetting my Feet upon a Rock, and eſtabliſhing my Goings.

And now came flocking into my Mind ſundry Scriptures with Heavenly Life and Power, as *Philip.* 1. 6. *I am confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good Work in us, will perfect it to the Day of Jeſus Chriſt.* And *Rom.* 11. 29. *The Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance.* And 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 24. Theſe, with ſome others, were ſet home upon my Heart by the Holy Ghoſt with much Aſſurance and Comfort.

Thus I continu'd for ſome Time without any remarkable Alteration, and then I began to give way again to my former doleful Deſpondency, for now this Manifeſtation began to diſappear, Corruptions re-aſſaulted me with renew'd and redoubl'd Vigor, Satan began afreſh to ſtorm my Soul with Showers of his envenom'd Darts, ſo that I cry'd as thoſe of old, *Lord, I know not what to do, but my Eyes are up unto thee,* 2 Chron. 20. 12.

The Lord now ſeeing it impoſſible I ſhould hold out long in this pining withering Condition, both in my inward and outward Man, towards the latter End of *September*, in infinite Mercy, directed me to that firſt great reviving *Cordial* for my fainting Soul, Mr. *Gurnall's Chriſtian in compleat Armour*: Or, *The Saints War againſt the Devil.* A little before this Book, by God's good Providence, came to my Hand, I had ſeveral encouraging Scriptures faſten'd upon my Mind. One Night coming down from *Family-Prayer* I took my Bible into my Hand, and light on *Iſa.* 29. 17. *Is it not yet a very little while and Lebanon ſhall become as a fruitful Field, and the fruitful Field be accounted for a Foreſt?* That is, thought I preſently, the Lord means, that my Soul, which is

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now as parch'd Ground, and an Habitation of Dragons, ſhall e'er long be made like the Garden of God. And that too in *Ezek.* 36. 33. *Thus ſays the Lord God, In that Day when I ſhall have cleanſed you from all your Iniquities, I will alſo cauſe you to dwell in the Cities, and the Waſtes ſhall be builded, and the deſolate Land ſhall be tilled, whereas it lay deſolate in the Sight of all that paſſed by, and they ſhall ſay, This Land that was deſolate is become like the Garden of Eden.* All which to me ſtrongly ſuggeſted the approaching Joy and Proſperity of my Soul, the Truth whereof appear'd in the Iſſue, for preſently upon it the Lord caſt this Book of Mr. *Gurnall's* into my Hand, *a Book well worth its Weight in Gold*, ſo ſweetly and amply doth he handle all manner of *Temptations*, each Page fill'd with ſuch Heavenly Treaſure, precious Obſervations and rich Experiences, ſo plain and intelligible, and withal ſo *moving and affecting*, that I could *ſeldom look into it with a dry Eye*; to mention every Particular that exactly anſwer'd my Caſe, fill'd me with Comfort, raviſh'd my Heart, and caus'd me to *weep for exceeding Joy*, were to tranſcribe almoſt the Book it ſelf: Oh! I have Reaſon Eternally to adore the infinite Love and Wiſdom of God for ever putting that Book into my Hands! 'Twas hither that I would come Home from Sermon with an hungry Soul and take my fill; (for alas! my Caſe was ſo ſtrangely *ſingular*, and ſo vaſtly different from God's ordinary Dealings with Souls in our Day, that either thro' the want of being *experimentally* acquainted with the hidden Wiles and Methods of *Satan*, or feelingly exercis'd with the Workings of *Corruption*, or thro' the Withdrawment of the Spirit, or ſomething,

thing, there was no likelihood of my ever receiving Relief from the Pulpit: My Diſeaſe and Malady was *extraordinary*, and therefore requir'd a more than *common Hand* or *ordinary Method* to work the Cure.) O! with what Greedineſs and Delight did I feed upon it Night and Day! Never was Rain more welcome to the parch'd gaſping Earth, or Water-brook to panting Hart, than this Heavenly Store of Goſpel-Encouragements and ſweet Experiences to my ſcorch'd *Soul*.

All that Winter long it ſet me a hungring and thirſting, panting and breathing after *God* and *Chriſt*; O! what Tenderneſs of Heart, what melting and relenting, what Weeping for Sin; now no Day paſs'd me wherein my Face was not cover'd with Tears, ſweet Freedom and Enlargement of Heart in confeſſing and bemoaning of Sin, and kindly Diſſolvings! what prizing God's Favour, what Love to Chriſt's Members, and ſuch as look'd like the Followers of the Lamb; yea, what earneſt and affectionate Out-goings of Soul where-ever I obſerv'd the gracious Impreſſions of the Divine Spirit; *what redeeming of Time!* Now I thought much of the leaſt Minute that was not ſpent in *reading*, *writing*, *praying*, *or meditating on the Things of another World*, grudging even my Time for *Meat and Sleep*, eſpecially the latter, really accounting what Time was conſum'd therein entirely *loſt*. *What Compaſſion to Souls! to precious Souls!* what Pleading with them and Yearning towards them! (tho' Satan, together with my own Carnal Shame and unreaſonable Baſhfulneſs, would ne'er admit me fully to diſcover the Workings of my Heart) what mourning over them and praying for them; I knew by *Experience* the moving melancholy Condition

dition they were in who are *without Chriſt in the World*, being juſt come out of that fearful State, therefore could not but lament them, and beſeech 'em to come out of their Chains; the Lord knows how often I have wiſh'd my Head *Water*, and my Eyes *Fountains of Tears*, that I might weep Day and Night for *precious Souls!* and have many times been more importunate at the Throne of Grace on their Accounts than my own, every Thought of them became a Wiſh or a Prayer, and every Look made my Bowels to rowl within me; I pity'd them as one that *knew the Terrors of the Lord*, and the diſmal Horror of their unfear'd Condition, and what an awful, dreadful thing it is for *a never-dying Soul* to be *finally loſt and gone for ever!* Oh! ſays I, for *this*, and *that*, and *t'other Perſon* to *periſh* from under the *Means of Life and Salvation!* to deſcend into the *Regions of Everlaſting Death* out of this enlighten'd *Goſhen*, *bleſs'd* with the very *mid-day* of the *Goſpel*, what Marble Heart, what Oaken Breaſt will not ſhake and ſhiver at this terrible Apprehenſion? What! to be *loſt everlaſtingly!* after the *repeated*, *reiterated Offers of a Jeſus!* Oh! this Conſideration is enough to ſtartle and amaze the moſt Adamantine Spirit! Theſe Things I now beheld with a *wakeful and moſt conſiderate Eye*, I had a *lively Proſpect* of their Miſery and Wo! I knew how *tragically* the Scene would end with all ſuch *unhappy Ones!* Ah! how much better, unſpeakably better, for ſuch Souls that they had never been born; I ſaw the flaming dreadful Gulph which gap'd to receive all *Chriſt-Deſpiſers!* and how low the unſufferable Weight of *Guilt* would for ever preſs thoſe ungrateful Wretches that *ſpurn the Bowels of a Redeemer!*

Redeemer! I now wonder'd that Miniſters could *preach*, and *pray*, and *talk no more affectionately* of the *great Things of another World*, whoſe Conſequences are *ſo weighty* and of *ſuch vaſt Importance*. I wonder'd how they could treat about the *Salvation of Souls*, and not ſhed a Tear at their *relentleſs Stubbornneſs*, eſpecially when I thought *theſe undying Souls* muſt be *ſav'd here*, or loſt *for ever*; I ſtood amaz'd at the Stupidity and Inſenſibleneſs of moſt Perſons: Oh! ſays I, were they once awaken'd as I am, did they ſee what I ſee that live in the neighbouring Suburbs of the *unſeen World*, they would not for their own ſakes ſo fondly trifle in the *Matters of Eternity*, nor ſo lightly value the *invaluable immortal Souls of others*; and if Perſons will not *now* underſtand the *precious Nature* of this *Heavenly Jewel*, the *doleful Day* won't fail to come, and *too late* extort that deſpairing Cry, *The Soul is preferrable to numberleſs Worlds!*

Now all this while I was detain'd in the Neighbourhood of *Death*, and walk'd upon the very Verge of *Eternity*, my Soul ſat as it were continually upon my Lip, ready to take its Flight, and therefore judg'd not according to what we ſee and is *Temporal*, for I ſaw Things *Inviſible* and *Eternal*.

Now I began to draw nigh to God with ſome *Pleaſure*, and accounted it ſweeter to me than my appointed Food; now my Hands that hung down were lifted up, and my feeble Knees gather'd Strength; but tho' it was *ſenſible*, it was alſo *gradual*, and I met with continual Rubs and Pulbacks in the way from *Satan* and *my own Corruptions*. The State of my Soul, from this time to the End of the Year, conſiſted not ſo much in (enjoying

joying of Chriſt, and ſolacing my ſelf in his dear Embraces, as in *hungring* for him and *enquiring* after him; Oh! now my Soul even fainted for God, the living God! Ah! how ſhould I have triumph'd to have had but one Smile from his Face! My Soul was now continually putting forth it ſelf in boundleſs Deſires and inexpreſſible Reaches! Now I knew what it was *to pray*, and to pour out my Soul as Water; my Soul was now fill'd with Expectation, and waited for the Lord, more than they which watch for the Morning. My Eye was upon Chriſt as the Hand-maid upon her Miſtreſs. Oh! now I cry'd, *Give me Chriſt* (a comfortable Aſſurance of his being mine,) *or elſe I die!* I roſe up early, and ſat up late, and gave my God no reſt.

Neither did there want much ſweet Communion with my God, even whilſt I thus mourn'd and lamented for his Abſence. O how near, how cloſe did I cling to him! Like *Auſtin*, of old my Heart was full of Prayers, and my Eyes full of Tears, alway *ſeeking after God*. My Heart was now ſet upon him, *all the Day long*. I thought I ſaw God in every thing; no Occurrence whatſoever but led me to him that was the *dearly Beloved of my Soul*. If I heard but the leaſt ſound of the Inſtruments of Muſick, preſently my Soul was carried up, as though I were amidſt the *Melody of Heaven*, and heard thoſe joyful Creatures *ſinging their harmonious Tunes of Hallelujah*. I was as if the Vail of Fleſh was drawn, and my Spirit had been preſent with the *inviſible World*.

One *Sabbath-day*, as I was deeply muſing upon my intricate Condition, I took my Bible, and met

met with these Words, *Jer.* 29. 11. *I know the Thoughts that I think towards you; thoughts of Peace and not of Evil, to give you an expected End.* Oh! what a Word was this! Who is able to conceive its sweet Intimations? As though the Lord had said to me, *My Thoughts are not your Thoughts; you think of nothing but Discouragement and Confusion, and that after all your Spiritual Adversaries will be too hard for you. But I know what I have resolv'd and determin'd concerning you; even at length to send you a most glorious Deliverance, and my Counsel shall stand.* At another time I had a strong and feeling Apprehension of the sweetness and veracity of that Promise, *Jer.* 50. 20. *In those Days and at that time,* says the Lord, *the Iniquities of* Israel *shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the Sins of* Judah, *and they shall not be found.* Why, where will they be hid that the piercing Eye of God's Justice shall not be able to descry them? Oh! they shall be cast into the bottomless Sea of *Christ's* precious Blood, and carried by that blessed Scape-goat into the Land of utter forgetfulness: And though all this while I wanted an assurance of my *Union to Christ*, and Interest in his *Redeeming Love*, (for this was that which I so vehemently prest after) and so had none of those exuberant and ravishing Joys, which are the usual Concomitants of such *Assurance*. Yet (thro' Grace) I continually enjoy'd a kind of an habitual calmness of Conscience, was free from fearful and slavish Apprehensions, and found a sensible Liberty of Soul, freedom and confidence in approaching to God, and delight in close and cordial Transactions with him.

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Thus I went on for ſix or ſeven Weeks, in the Strength and Encouragement that was given in (by reading Mr. *Gurnall*) from Chriſt, for from (him) receiv'd I all this while my Spiritual Supplies in a ſecret and unſpeakable manner, as the Members from the Head, and as the Branch from the Vine. *This Man of God* laid the *Foundation*, (if I may ſo expreſs it) of my after Liberty; but to free me fully from my horrid *Temptations*, and to extricate me clean out of all my Entanglements, *Chriſt* reſerv'd to accompliſh by the Writings of thoſe peerleſs and precious Servants of his, *Robert Bolton* and *William Whately*.

About the beginning of *November* the Lord brought to my Hands Mr. *Samuel Clark's Lives of the Fathers*, which prov'd not more pleaſant in the reading than profitable, this whetted my Deſires, and put a freſh Edge upon my former Longings. O! there's an Heavenly attractive Power and Efficacy in ſuch *Examples* to allure others to Imitation! Now was my Soul ſharp ſet, how eagerly did I now long and ſtrive all that I could poſſibly to be *like them!* Their *Faith* and *Love*, their *Zeal* and *Induſtry!* their *Humility* and *Self-denial*, their *redeeming the Time* and *contemning the World*, with the reſt of that Heavenly Chain of Graces, put me all into a Flame, and ſtirr'd me up to an holy Emulation. I ſat not down contented with the bare reading thoſe Hiſtorical Relations, I had another guiſe Taſte of ſuch Sacred Stories, and a greater Deſign in view. Alas! (I would often weep and ſay) *What is it to me that they were ſuch excellent Chriſtians, and ſo eminently gracious, if I am not ſo?* This would not at all aſſwage my Longings, but only aggravate my Grief, wherefore as I read I earneſtly pray'd

pray'd to God, that in every thing that was excellent and truly heavenly, I might be help'd to follow them, with a full deſire, if poſſible, to overtake them; and thus I reap'd unſpeakable advantage out of every Narration. *The Exemplary Lives, Triumphant Deaths, and Memorable Sayings of thoſe ancient Champions of the Faith,* encourag'd and comforted me incredibly; particularly two of *Chryſoſtom*: Says he, *As a Rock, though Winds and Waves beat againſt it, is immoveable; ſo Faith, grounded on the Rock, Chriſt, holds out in all Temptations and Spiritual Combats.* O! what a Sentence was this to my Soul! ſweeter than Honey and the Honey-Comb! And again, *The Devil's firſt Aſſault is violent, reſiſt that and his ſecond will be weaker, and that being reſiſted he proves a Coward.*

The Lives of Mr. *Bolton* and *Whately*, did alſo much conduce to my After-comfort and Eſtabliſhment: For being before-hand, ſo intimately acquainted with their Exemplary Converſation, Heart-experiences and glorious End; it made way for the hearty Reception of, and gave a mighty force and energy to the things they deliver, which I ſaw was no other than the tranſcript of their own Hearts, and did but only cloath their own inward *Experiences* with Words. But as yet, I knew nothing of their *Writings*, which I have ſince reflected on many times, as an admirable thing and precious deſign of love to my Soul. The Lord would never ſuffer thoſe Books to come within my view, which effe-

ctually treated of the ſubtle and dreadful depths of *Satan*, and other Experimental Paſſages and Soul-ſecrets of combating and wreſtling Chriſtians, till I had firſt in a moſt ſharp and trying manner thorowly paſt through all my ſelf, that ſo at laſt I might receive the *moſt ſound and laſting Comfort*. But when once the ſet time was come, God ſent them in abundance and ſpar'd not; *Bolton*, *Whately*, incomparable *Hall*, with others, the very flower and choiceſt of his Servants; ſo excellently verſt in all *intricate Points and experimental Paſſages* of practical Divinity, admirably adapted to my perplex'd Circumſtances, and the particular Wants and Thirſtings of my Soul.

Still *Satan* left me not; wherefore the Lord, to make good that Promiſe to me, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the Temptation make a way for Eſcape.*: In the beginning of *January*, 170$\frac{6}{7}$. mercifully directed me to that matchleſs Treatiſe of Mr. *Robert Bolton's Inſtructions, for a right Comforting afflicted Conſciences*; as alſo, Mr. *William Whately's Treatiſe of the New Birth*; which two Books ſtrove, as it were, in the hand of the Spirit, which ſhould comfort me moſt: Whilſt Mr. *Bolton* laid open the Tricks and Devices of that *Old Serpent*, Mr. *Whately* would ſweetly encourage me againſt the reſtleſs Aſſaults and furious Rebellions of *my own Corruptions*; and theſe two Books came with the more grateful Sweetneſs, becauſe they

they were ſent me as a *remarkable anſwer of Prayer.*

On the 27th of *December*, 1707, which was about a Week before, I had been pleading with the Lord in a moſt ſollicitous manner, and he was graciouſly pleas'd to hear my Cry: This was the joyful Return of that Days Supplications; the happy and bleſſed Improvement of that *Opportunity*. But ſo many and ſo earneſt Petitions, as I that Day put up, ſo engag'd as I was at the Throne of Grace, I was hardly a quarter of an Hour by my ſelf all the Day, and ſcarce utter'd five of my ſo importunate Requeſts in *Words.*

In the Morning I went to hear the Reverend Mr. *Matthew Clark*, who from *Prov.* 1. 10. *My Son, if Sinners entice thee conſent thou not*, preach'd a Sermon, more eſpecially directed to the *Younger Sort*; to me, a Sermon overflowing with Heart-chearing Joy, and Soul-refreſhing Comfort! I heard that from the Pulpit, and ſaw that in the Aſſembly, which even raviſh'd my Soul, and is never to be forgotten. When I departed the Houſe of God, I left my Heart, my Affections behind me: All the Afternoon long I walk'd up and down longing to be deliver'd from *Company*, that with all freedom I might empty my Soul into the Boſom of Chriſt. Ah! how plentifully could I have wept and pour'd out my Soul as Water! How big was my Heart with Godly Sorrow! I was *brimful of unexpreſſible Deſires, inward Wiſhes, Sighs and Cravings*, piercing

cing Heaven, as I went along the Streets, with *ſudden and reiterated Ejaculations, ſtrong Cries, and unutterable Groanings.* Theſe were Darts ſhot into Heaven, thick and threefold, without the notice and obſervation of the Company I was in; nay were not at that time ſo ſtrong and perceptible to my own Senſe and Apprehenſion, as they have been ſince in Remembrance. Theſe *inward, hidden, paſſionate* Workings of Soul, aſcended the Clouds, and rang aloud in God's Ears, though I ſcarcely open'd my Lips. O! the *Spirit himſelf* made Interceſſion for me, with Groans that could not be utter'd! And though I could not diſtinctly expreſs at that time, the thing I ſo *vehemently long'd for*, yet he that ſearcheth the Heart, *knew what was the Mind of the Spirit.* O! the Pangs of Affection that were now ſpringing after *Chriſt!* My Soul's deſire after *Holineſs and Grace*, now flames forth in ſuch *fervent Requeſts and Expoſtulations*, as could bear no denial, but even breaks for the longing it hath to it. *All that Day*, from Morning to Night, my Heart was ſo *intenſely* ſet upon *God*, and with *that Ardour and Solicitude of Spirit*, that no *Diverſion*, or *Company*, or *Occurrence* whatſoever, could poſſibly take it off. It was *my Beloved* I ſought, and *nothing* could ſerve me but *him.* I muſt have *Chriſt, none but Chriſt:* All the Riches, and Honours, and Pleaſures of *the World*, were now become as taſtleſs as the white of an Egg. Ah! what could they do for a *poor deſerted Soul, ready to die, at the abſence of her Beloved.* Could they procure it *one Look of a reconciled God?*

God? Could they *ſatisfy the Cravings of an Immortal Spirit*, or *skreen* from *Divine Wrath?* Or, *ſtill an accuſing Conſcience, or allay the Grief of a wounded Spirit?* Alas! they can do no ſuch thing; would they aſſiſt me in my Conflicts with *Sin* and *Satan*, and *Death* and *Hell*, and at laſt enable me to *overcome?* 'Twas this that I wanted, and this I knew, only he could accompliſh: Oh! therefore, it was *Chriſt*, and *nothing* but *Chriſt*, that could anſwer the Exigencies of my diſtreſſed Caſe. *He, he alone, could ſtill the Clamours, and aſſwage the Longings of my Sin-ſick, Love-ſick Soul!* In him I ſaw an *overflowing Fountain, an unexhauſted Fullneſs of all Supplies; Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification and Redemption*, and all that I cou'd either *want* or *deſire*; for it hath pleaſed the *Father, that in Chriſt ſhould all Fullneſs dwell.*

It's eaſy to imagin what ſuch marvelous Stirrings and Operations of the *Spirit* did portend and ſignify: When my Heart was ſo extraordinarily enlarg'd, and fill'd with ſuch importunate Deſires, it was a plain Indication that my *Beloved* was not far off; Such hungrings and thirſtings after *Righteouſneſs*, don't uſe to go long unſatisfied; Such vehement outgoings of Soul, and kindly diſſolvings, are not wont to be rais'd in the Heart by that benign Spirit of Grace in vain, or on purpoſe to fruſtrate and diſappoint them.

Well, in about a Week after, the Lord put it into my Heart to get the aforemention'd Books. But alas! when I look'd into them I could hardly contain, to think how I had all this while been impos'd upon by the Devil! No ſooner did I begin to read, but I preſently found ſuch a world of *my own Experience*, that one would have thought they had copied out of my very Heart: But eſpecially Mr. *Bolton*, that rare Workman, that admirable Labourer in the Lord's Vineyard; who having himſelf been moſt terribly afflicted with the *very ſame Temptations*, ſo detected and diſcover'd *Satan*'s Wiles, as gave me preſent Relief. I there, by God's Aſſiſtance, inſtantly got me an Antidote for every Temptation. There I found, *That Man of God*, *That One of a Thouſand*, taught to the Kingdom of Heaven, train'd in the School of various Temptations and ſpiritual Conflicts, *inward Trials* and afflictions of Soul; I ſay, there I found him to my endleſs Comfort, tracing and purſuing that *Old Serpent*, through all his *Methods*, *Devices* and *Depths*: This pretious Man cauſes him to quit this *Weapon* quite, I mean *Blaſphemous Thoughts*, and leaves him no more room to play upon my Soul. *Satan* is here laid out in his Colours, and made to appear as he is, and a Devil indeed; and now he grows weary of thoſe *horrid Suggeſtions*, when he found I contemn'd them, and *departs for a Seaſon*; nay, and I believe my ſweet dear *Jeſus* hath commanded him for ever to deſiſt, and never more to weild that *terrifying Weapon* againſt me

me to Eternity. An *abſolute Freedom* from them, is not to be expected in this Life, which is to be a *Warfare*, every Inch of it. Let *Satan* tempt or not tempt, aſſault or retreat, I am reſolv'd (through Grace) to ſtand prepar'd for his Attacks, and though for the preſent he be not utterly vanquiſh'd, yet I truſt, I ſhall henceforth be ever able readily to take the Shield of Faith, and bid Defiance to his *fiery Darts*.

Thus in the Day when I cry'd, the Lord anſwer'd me, and ſtrengthned me with Strength in my Soul: Becauſe he hath heard the Voice of my Supplications, becauſe he hath inclin'd his Ear to me, I will call upon him as long as I live. My Soul ſhall make her boaſt in the Lord, the Humble *ſhall hear thereof and be glad. The Sorrows of Death compaſſed me about, and the Pains of Hell got hold of me: Then called I upon the Name of the Lord, and he deliver'd my Soul from Death, mine Eyes from Tears, my Feet from falling. O! magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his Name together: O! taſte and ſee that the Lord is good! Bleſſed is the Man that truſteth in him. They that ſow in Tears ſhall reap in Joy; he that goeth forth weeping, bearing pretious Seed, ſhall doubtleſs come again rejoycing, bringing his Sheaves with him.*

And now there comes nothing but heaps of Mercy, floods of Comfort, heavens of Joy, Grace and Glory: One Manifeſtation upon the back of another, even almoſt a

continued and uninterrupted Sun-ſhine. Now the *Lord Jeſus* began to return to my Soul, with the refreſhing Beams of his wonted Smiles, after my ſore and terrible Wreſtlings with the Powers of Darkneſs. And now methought I heard Chriſt ſaying to me as to his Church of old; *Can.* 2. *Riſe up my Love, my Fair One, and come away. For lo! the Winter is paſt, the Rain is over and gone, ariſe my Love, my Fair One, and come away.*

But before I proceed, I would *diſtinctly* and *particularly* ſet down, in what manner the *Lord Jeſus* was pleas'd, in the abundance of his Grace, *totally to deliver me from Blaſphemous Thoughts*, (the want of which, in the *Experiences* of thoſe, which at any time occurr'd to my Hands, was that which detain'd me *ſo long* in the Devil's Stocks, and made me undergo many a dark and diſmal Day, which otherwiſe I might have eaſily and happily eſcaped) and ſo accompliſh'd that in and upon me, which I thought, and often ſaid was *utterly impoſſible*: For this was the Difficulty which lay ſtill in my way, and which I look'd upon as *wholly unſurmountable*. I thought, That at *ſome certain inſtant of Time*, I muſt *at once, and in a Moment, be totally and finally rid of theſe Thoughts*, ſo as not to have the leaſt touch or ſpice of them more, to Eternity. Out of this falſe and ungrounded Suppoſition, or rather crafty Deluſion of the Devil, *That the leaſt Tincture or Sympton of any ſuch thoughts was utterly incompatible with a State of Grace.* Now, ſays I, this is

is *flatly impoſſible*, ever to be *ſo* deliver'd from them. But now obſerve how *Chriſt* goes to work to diſſolve this Work *of the Devil*, he firſt of all, makes it clearly to appear to me, by an irreſiſtable Work of his *Spirit*, that there had been a *thorow and univerſal Change* wrought upon my Soul at ſuch a time, and that I was then infallibly *united unto himſelf, and ingrafted into that true Vine*; which being once done, I was *ſufficiently aſſur'd I could never be ſeparated from him*: Whereupon it naturally follow'd, and plainly appear'd to me, *That theſe Blaſphemous Thoughts, whether purely from* Satan, *or purely from my own Heart, or partly from both, or however they came, were not at all inconſiſtent with a pardon'd, juſtified, regenerate State.* Nay, were themſelves a convincing Argument, that the Lord had been at work with my Spirit; becauſe, till *ſuch a time* (being the time when I was firſt awaken'd) I was in Peace and Quiet, like other Men, that are ſecure and dead in their Sins, and had none of *theſe* violent Hurries, impetuous Motions, and ſtrange Aſſaults. *This was the firſt Step the Lord took with me*, viz. *to convince me, that they were incident to a pardoned State*; the reſt will eaſily follow. Well, though I was thus diſentangl'd and freed from their *perplexing, amazing Guilt*; yet theſe *Blaſphemous Thoughts* continually haunted me. Now having by this time obtain'd ſome good hope, through Grace, concerning my own Soul, I was fill'd with Compaſſion and Concern for *the Souls of others*, and ſo was ſet all on fire to awaken

them to a Conſideration of their State and Danger, that from Morning to Night I was perpetually taken up in writing and ſtudying how to prevail with them; and when my barren narrow Conceit, would not furniſh me with Expreſſions ſufficiently *vehement and moving*, anſwering to the inſatiable Eagerneſs of my Mind; I would lay hold on any thing I met with in others, that had any Life and Spirit in it, *I car'd not who or what were the Means, ſo but the Soul were ſav'd*; and thus being eagerly Occupied, I almoſt *forgot the Troubler of my Soul.* Neither could he find that Opportunity to hurl in his fiery Darts, when I was thus buſily employ'd. And at laſt, being enlightned, directed and rightly inform'd about them, by reading ſome precious Books, whoſe Authors had themſelves paſt the *ſame fiery Tryal*; I found there was nothing in it but *Satan's pure Malice* and *Spight*, and that thouſands now in Heaven had experienc'd the *ſame*: So I ev'n neglected and paſt them by with Contempt and Slighting, and did not take them to Heart, as I was us'd to do; and ſo by little and little, when he ſaw it was bootleſs, *this Infernal Archer laid aſide his Bow*, and left me quite to the infinite Rejoycing of my Soul, and eternal Honour of the Captain of my Salvation: And tho' he may be buiſy ſtill this way at ſometimes, *as he both hath and will*, yet he is a Chain'd Captive, Conquer'd Enemy, he may roar but cannot devour.

But

But as for my *Corruptions*, my radicated inveterate *Corruptions*, they are alive and vigorous ſtill. This *Pharaoh* wont ſo eaſily quit his Vaſſal; I am put to diſpute every Inch of my Ground, and muſt ne'er look to paſs a Day without the bittereſt Conflicts; and tho' the *Victory* be *ſure*, the *Combat* is *terrible*, and *ſhall be ſav'd at laſt as by Fire*; they have receiv'd from Chriſt their *mortal Wound*, and lye gaſping under his conquering Grace, but yet ſometimes they gather Strength, and with their dying Struggles ſorely ſhock me; I am led ſometimes an *unwilling Captive*, and hurry'd into Sins againſt a ſweet *Jeſus*, which makes me to cry, *Oh! that my Eyes were Fountains, and my Cheeks Channels, that ſhall never be dry'd.*

Now the Seaſon of the Year coming about in which that merciful Deſign of *electing*, *redeeming*, *everlaſting Love* was firſt made known to me, when the Lord would no longer have me ignorant and unacquainted what Intentions of Grace were lodg'd in his Heart from all Eternity, but began glorioufly to diſplay and manifeſt himſelf to me in the Face of his *dear Son*, and clearly to unfold the gracious Purpoſes of his Heart by many Tokens and Pledges, *familiar Intimations*, and *amazing Aſſurances* of his *ſpecial* and *peculiar Love*; I ſay, I began now to meditate and to call to mind my *then* Experiences of his boundleſs Grace, and narrowly to review and ponder upon his primary wonderful Dealings with my

my Soul, and to run over in my Mind again and again the bleſſed Footſteps and marvellous Workings of the *Holy Ghoſt* in my *Converſion*, that at length I could very diſtinctly remember and reflect upon this and the other *Operation and Manifeſtation of the Spirit*, together with its *particular Place*, *Time and Circumſtance*, whereby I grew wonderfully confirm'd in all my *former Comforts* and *Experiences*, and was infinitely aſſur'd that they were from the *Spirit of God*, and no *Deluſion*; for alas! I could now eaſily remember how in *this*, and *that*, and *every* Corner, I graſp'd my dear *Jeſus* in the Arms of my Faith! how *familiarly* I convers'd with him, as a Man with his Friend! how ſweetly he kiſs'd me with the Kiſſes of his Lips, and made me even *ſick of Love!* I could now ſay, *This* was the *Day*, *this* the *happy Hour*, and *this* the very *Seat* in which *I was converted to Chriſt!* and from off which my Body was, as it were, by the mighty energenical Workings of the *Spirit*, and with a kind of irreſiſtible Power and holy Violence, conſtrain'd to *reach out to Heaven! This* the *Bible* that ſo much affected me! *That* the *Scripture* that ſo melted my Heart, and reſolv'd me all into Tears, and produc'd ſuch plain Proofs of an *inward*, *real*, *hearty Repentance! This* the *Sentence* which carry'd me to *Chriſt*, and fill'd me with *ineffable Joy!* I could now remember what a ſtrange Alteration was preſently caus'd even in my *outward Man*, how juſt before I was dead in *Sin*, and almoſt dead in *Nature too*; and how ſtrangely I *reviv'd* and came

came to *Life again* at the happy Report and glad Tidings of a *Chriſt* and a *Pardon!* (Oh! what did I then ſee and feel! what *Thoughts* did poſſeſs and fill my Soul! O! the Torrent of *unſpeakable* and *Soul-inebriating Joy* that ſprings from the Application of *the Blood of Jeſus!*) new Spirits ſprung into my Eyes, new Blood into my Cheeks, freſh Sprightlineſs into my Countenance, new Life into my Heart, juſt as if I were afreſh uſher'd into the World again, and thereupon enjoy'd ſuch a ſenſible Degree of Health and Vivacity of Spirit, that I was ſcarce ever more vigorous and lively in all my Life! And now I ſhould think on *Job* 33. 25. *His Fleſh ſhall be freſher than a Childs, he ſhall return to the Days of his Youth.* I could now ſay, *There* was I ſuch a Morning fill'd with *Joy unſpeakable and glorious!* In *ſuch a Church-Yard* had I ſuch a ſweet Glimpſe of *Eternal Glory*, and Fore-taſte of the *Reſurrection to come*, that e'er I was aware *my Soul was made like the Chariots of Aminidab! That* Morning was I fill'd with the *Holy Ghoſt*, and had many glorious Interviews of *Jeſus!* Such *Sights* of the *inviſible World* as was ready to raviſh away my very Soul from me! In that *Company's Warehouſe* did Chriſt ſhine in upon my Soul ſo *ſweetly* and *ſtrongly* as was ready to overwhelm me! *That's* the very Place in which the Spirit gave *the Turn to all the Powers of my Soul!* In ſuch a Field was I quite ſick of Love for Chriſt, and long'd every Step I took to be caught up in the Clouds to be with him!

him! frequent Flaſhes of *Immortal Light* like Lightning glancing upon my Soul! All that Day I was in the very *Suburbs of Glory*, even in one continued rapturous Extaſy of Joy and Exultation! O! the Effuſions, Emanations, Illapſes, the ſtrong, pure, unmix'd, quickning Influences of *the Comforter*, which immediately follow'd upon my *Union* and *Implantation* into *Chriſt*. O! Ocean of pure and *ever-ſpringing Joy!* one Drop of which ſo infinitely ſurpaſſeth *all the fugitive Pleaſures of Sin!* I was fill'd with inconceivable Amazement and Thoughts of Admiration, and had as much *Joy* and *Glory*, *Chriſt* and *Heaven*, as this poor weak Tabernacle could bear! *Pauſe* here, Oh my Soul, and in a Divine Extaſy conceive, if thou canſt, what it will be to be for ever gazing on the beatifick *Glory* of his *unveil'd Face*, when but one Glance from his Eyes doth now overwhelm thee with ſuch unutterable and inſupportable Raviſhments! and if the *Firſt-fruits* and *Fore-taſtes* be ſo *exquiſitely ſweet*; Oh, what will the *Harveſt* be! (But theſe very Prelibations of Heaven were at the ſame time mix'd with inward Wreſtlings againſt my corrupt Affections and Aſſaults from Satan, who envy'd this my Anticipation of *Glory*, and my Mind *fled from all Appearances of Evil.)* What Meltings of Heart! yearning of Bowels, paſſionate Wiſhes and Workings of Affection toward *precious Souls!* as I paſs'd by every one, being juſt come out of that dreadful State! *This* is the *Shop* in which I ſaw and felt *Things unutterable!*

and

and ſpake to *Chriſt* many times as it were *Face to Face*, where I ſo often ſung with Raviſhment of Spirit, *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!* O! what Joy like to the Joy of a *juſtified Sinner!* Theſe Divine Springings and inward Raptures my *unregenerate Soul* knew nothing of; I could now remember the *awful* and *myſterious* manner of the *Spirit*'s moving upon the Face of my Soul, what *new* and *ſtrange Conceptions* and *Ideas* I had of Things, what *uncouth Goings* I felt upon my Mind all the while he was *transforming* and *changing* my Heart, how *irreſiſtibly*, yet *gently*, he bow'd and inclin'd my *Will*, and made me cry out from the very bottom of my Soul, as one quite overcome with ſuch Exceſs of Love, *My Lord! and my God!* I could now remember what *Hungrings* and *Cravings* I felt in my *new born Soul* after *Chriſt*, his *Righteouſneſs* and *Likeneſs*, juſt like the Gnawings of an *empty Stomach*, ſo that a Prayer Morning and Evening would nothing ſatisfy me, but only ſerve to whet and ineager my Appetite, and like Oil caſt upon a Flame did but augment my Longings; wherefore I was for *praying always*, in every Place, whatever I was about, or whoever was with me, for none could hinder theſe ſecret and ſweet *Out-goings* of Soul to the *Lord Jeſus*. What a *ſtrange unuſual Light* continually ray'd in upon me when the *Holy Ghoſt* firſt vouchſaf'd to take up his Reſidence and *Inhabitation* in my *Soul*, that for a Month or Six Weeks *I liv'd involv'd in ſecret Raptures, and*

enjoy'd

enjoy'd an Heaven upon Earth! O! that golden Spot and Pearl of my Life! thoſe winning, Chriſt-endearing Seaſons! This was a Time of *Love* indeed! With what Delight did I ſet down under the Shadow of *my Beloved*; and how ſweet was his Fruit to my Taſte! He daily brought me into his *Banqueting-Houſe*, and there his Banner over me was *Love!* His Left Hand was always under my Head, and his Right Hand that embrac'd me. Oh! had any one in theſe Days enquir'd of me and ask'd, *What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved?* With what melting Admiration could I have aſſur'd them, from my own inward Experience, *That he was the chiefeſt of Ten Thouſands, and altogether lovely!* And all this now comes infinitely ſhort of what I have *inwardly* felt in my very Heart, of the Grace of God and the Comforts of his Spirit, yea, are *nothing to thoſe near and bleſt Approaches Jeſus* hath ſometimes made to my Soul.

But it is not for the *Chriſtian* to wear his Crown in this Life; though I was now in the *Mount* I muſt down into the *Vale* again, and there be afreſh ſet upon by my Spiritual Adverſaries, eſpecially that which lurks in my Boſom; that, were it not that the Lord upholds me with a ſtrong Hand, I ſhould be *amaz'd*, *confounded*, and *utterly deſpair*, how often have I read and heard of poor Souls crying out of their *Deadneſs* and *Diſtraction* in holy Duties, the Coldneſs of their *Love*, the Weakneſs of their *Faith*, and the

the like, as though ſuch Things were inconſiſtent with a State of Grace, and themſelves were the vileſt of Wretches, *Hypocrites*, and to have their Portion with the Damned; but ah! what would they think of themſelves, how would they take on and ſhiver into nothing almoſt, at the very Appearance and Apprehenſion of thoſe dreadful Encounters with Satan and the Body of Death, which I continually ſuſtain! and yet, Thanks be to God, through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord, for I do infinitely triumph in him, and know that to me there's *no Condemnation*, I am ſure, I am infinitely ſure, that *all my Sins*, (though of ſo Crimſon Dye) *are fully pardon'd, and for ever done away in the Blood of that ſpotleſs Lamb.*

And theſe *ſtrong* and *fierce Corruptions* are ſuffer'd to exerciſe me only for my *Spiritual Good*, to make me loath and bewail my *Original Corruption*, to make me more *watchful*, more *fervent in Prayer*, and to walk *humbly* and *dependingly all my Days*, to ſtrip me of all *Self-Confidence* and *Pride*, and to make me *fly into the Arms of Jeſus, admiringly crying out with the utmoſt Adoration, Grace! Grace! all Grace! free, amazing, unexampl'd Grace!* that I might ſee what Cauſe I have for ever to adore and bleſs God for *Chriſt*, that *unſpeakable Gift*! in whom is my Righteouſneſs and Strength, in this perfect and compleat Righteouſneſs, made up of Chriſt's Active and Paſſive Obedience to the Precept and Penalty of the Law, which God *freely* beſtows

beſtows upon and reckons unto me, and in which I ſtand perfectly juſtify'd in his Sight; I ſay, *in this, and in this alone*, I truſt, I reſt, I rejoyce and triumph; 'tis *this* I always bring in the Arms of my *Faith* when I go to God for Pardon, Grace, Strength, or any Spiritual Bleſſing: Oh! this is it that enables me to go to him as a *Father*, with that *Child-like* Boldneſs and Confidence, that I am ſure what I ask I receive, and what I ſeek I find; 'tis my being deck'd with this *Garment of my Elder Brother*, that makes me not only approach the Throne of *Grace*, with full Aſſurance of carrying away a Bleſſing, but even to rejoyce at the Thoughts, and think long for the Time when I ſhall be call'd to the *Judgment-Bar*; this is the Spring and procuring Cauſe of all thoſe aſtoniſhing Outgoings of Love, and overflowing Manifeſtations of Divine Grace, which has ſo richly abounded towards me the *vileſt of Sinners*, that Men and Angels, nay, the whole Creation, may ſtand everlaſtingly amaz'd! And I doubt not but whole Heaven will ring with Hoſanna's, and reſound with Hallelujahs, when they ſhall fully underſtand out of what Depths of Sin and Wretchedneſs, and out of what Hells of Horror and Wo this Soul of mine, *ſo weak, ſo guilty, ſo impure, ſo wretched a Captive*, was redeem'd and recover'd to the Life of Grace and endleſs Glory by this Righteouſneſs wrought out by *Jeſus Chriſt*; whilſt others are hatching of Cockatrice's Eggs, and weaving to themſelves the Spider's Web, *to me* (*SWEET JESUS SHALL BE ALL IN ALL.*)

And

And now, for the Glory of God, and further Edification and Eſtabliſhment of my own Soul, I acquainted a Reverend Miniſter, (whoſe Miniſtry I experienc'd to be ſingularly accompany'd with the Divine Preſence) with my Deſire to walk in all the *Ordinances* and Appointments of Chriſt, according to the Order of the *Goſpel*, in Communion with that Church of Chriſt under his Care; and having given in ſome ſatisfying Account of God's Dealings with my Soul, was accordingly receiv'd into Fellowſhip with them.

Thus I have declar'd my Afflictions of Soul, and alſo the End of the Lord, and we ſee *the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender Mercy! Oh! that none would ever deſpair for my ſake, for the aggravated Guilt of their numberleſs Sins, the fierieſt Temptations, or the moſt ſtrong Corruptions!*

And now I am concern'd for nothing ſo much as *that God may have the Glory of his Grace.* Bleſſed be God my Enquiry now is not, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* But, *What ſhall I render unto the Lord!* I know not what to ſay I am ſo infinitely *beholden to FREE GRACE!* God hath ſhewn ſuch Love to *me* as former Ages never heard of! Oh! it hath *Lengths*, and *Breadths*, and *Heights*, and *Depths!* which will never be fathom'd to Eternity! I am even aſtoniſh'd and overwhelm'd at the Apprehenſion of it, and ſeeing I can never expreſs its Dimenſions, *I'll wonder,*

wonder, and adore, and bleſs for ever! I now ſet the Crown upon *Chriſt's* Head, and give *him* the Glory of all my Enjoyments. *Not unto me, Lord, not unto me, but unto thy Name be all the Glory.* For 'tis by thy *Grace I am what I am*; I live, yet not I, but Chriſt lives in me, and the Life I now live in the Fleſh is *by the Faith of the Son of God, who hath loved me, and given himſelf for me.* And was thy Love to me indeed *ſo warm*, ſweet Jeſus, as to give thy Life for me thine Enemy? *O! Immortal Love!* Ah! that I were with thee to ſing thee endleſs Hallelujahs for the endearing Wonders of thy *dying Love*! Lord! I long to be once in my happy Eternity, *that I may do nothing but love and praiſe thee for ever.*

Now worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Glory, and Honour, and Bleſſing, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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